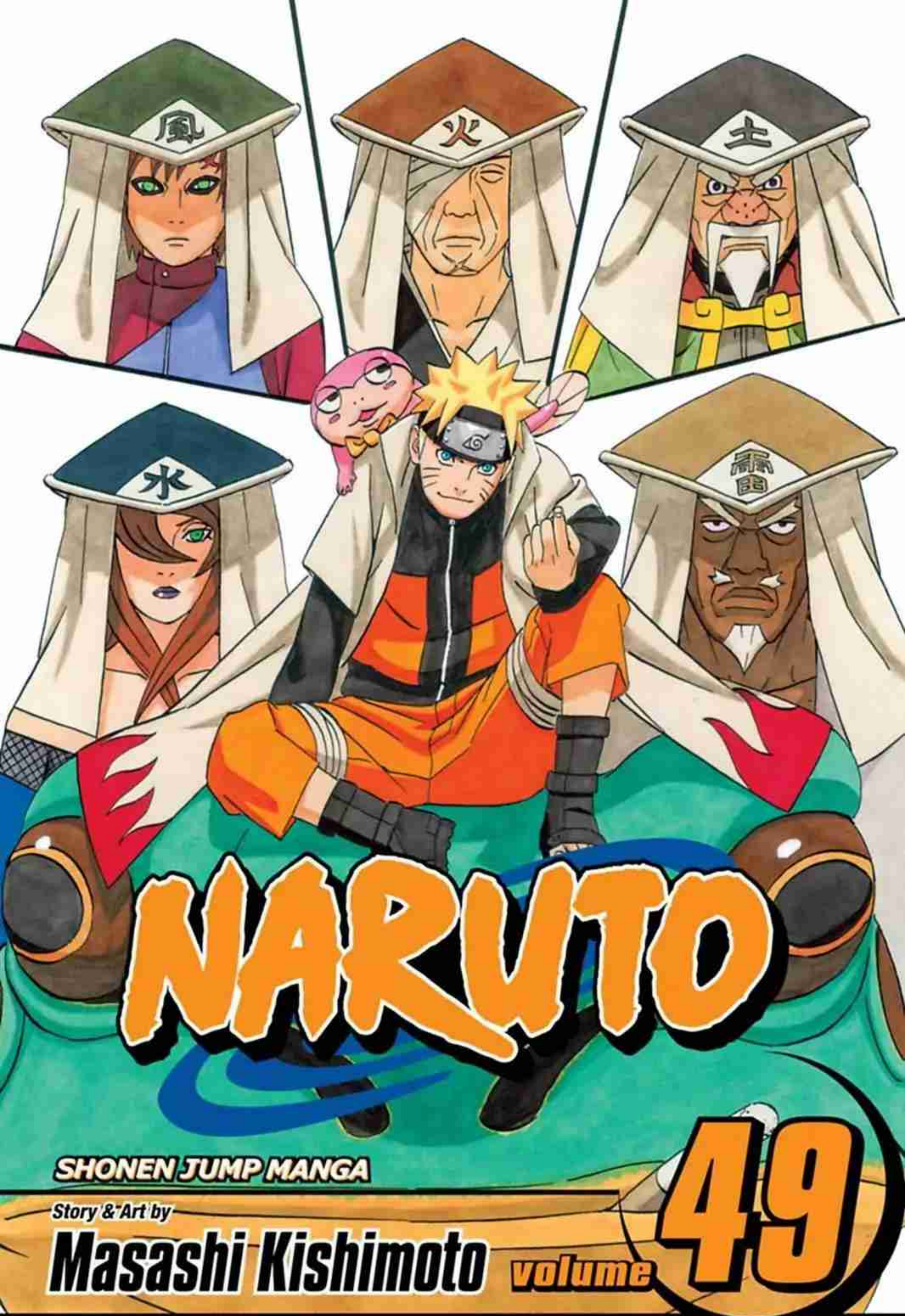
風
火
土
水
霧
NARUTO
SHONEN JUMP MANGA
Story & Art by
Masashi Kishimoto
volume 49

Recently, because I get lonely when I am working alone, I keep movies playing continuously while I work. I'll occasionally glance at the movie while focusing on work, but then I'll suddenly realize that I'm focused on the movie and just occasionally scribbling on the paper. It's especially bad when it comes to trilogies!

岸本斉史

Seriously... (beads of sweat)

—Masashi Kishimoto, 2010

Author/artist Masashi Kishimoto was born in 1974 in rural Okayama Prefecture, Japan. After spending time in art college, he won the Hop Step Award for new manga artists with his manga **Karakuri** (Mechanism). Kishimoto decided to base his next story on traditional Japanese culture. His first version of **Naruto**, drawn in 1997, was a one-shot story about fox spirits; his final version, which debuted in **Weekly Shonen Jump** in 1999, quickly became the most popular ninja manga in Japan.

NARUTO VOL. 49
SHONEN JUMP Manga Edition
This graphic novel contains material that was originally published in English in SHONEN JUMP #85–88. Artwork in the magazine may have been slightly altered from that presented here.

STORY AND ART BY MASASHI KISHIMOTO

Translation/Mari Morimoto
Series Touch-up Art & Lettering/Inori Fukuda Trant
Additional Touch-up Art & Lettering/Sabrina Heep
Design/Sean Lee
Series Editor/Joel Enos
Graphic Novel Editor/Megan Bates

VP, Production/Alvin Lu
VP, Sales & Product Marketing/Gonzalo Ferreyra
VP, Creative/Linda Espinosa
Publisher/Hyoe Narita

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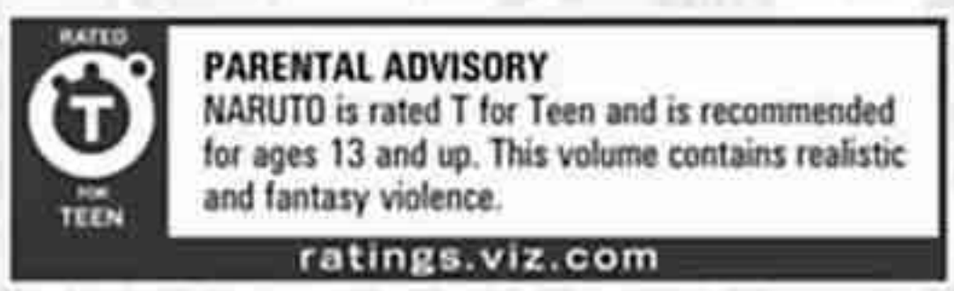
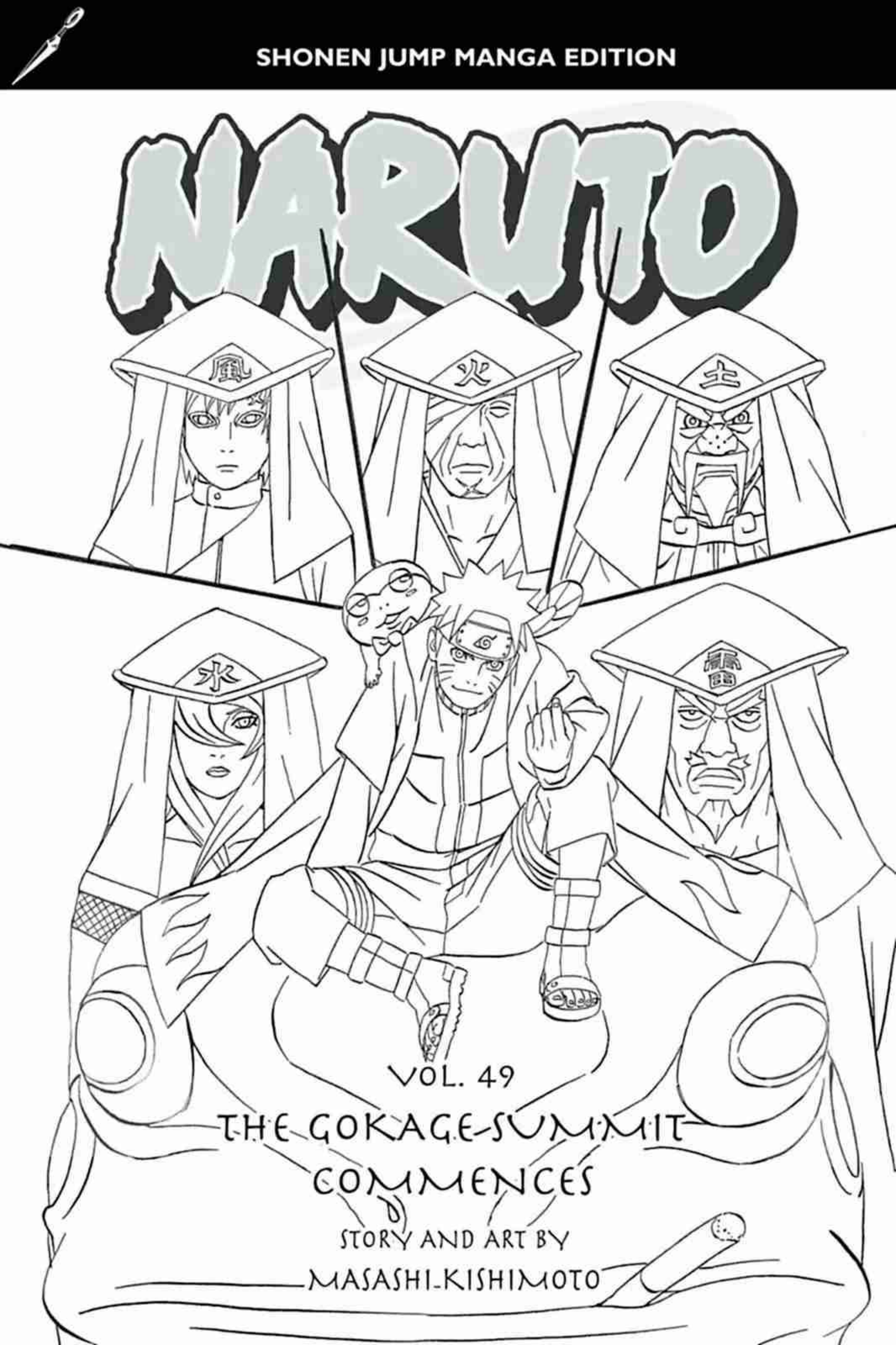


SHONEN JUMP MANGA EDITION

NARUTO



VOL. 49

THE GOKAGE SUMMIT COMMENCES

STORY AND ART BY
MASASHI KISHIMOTO

CHARACTERS

Naruto ナルト

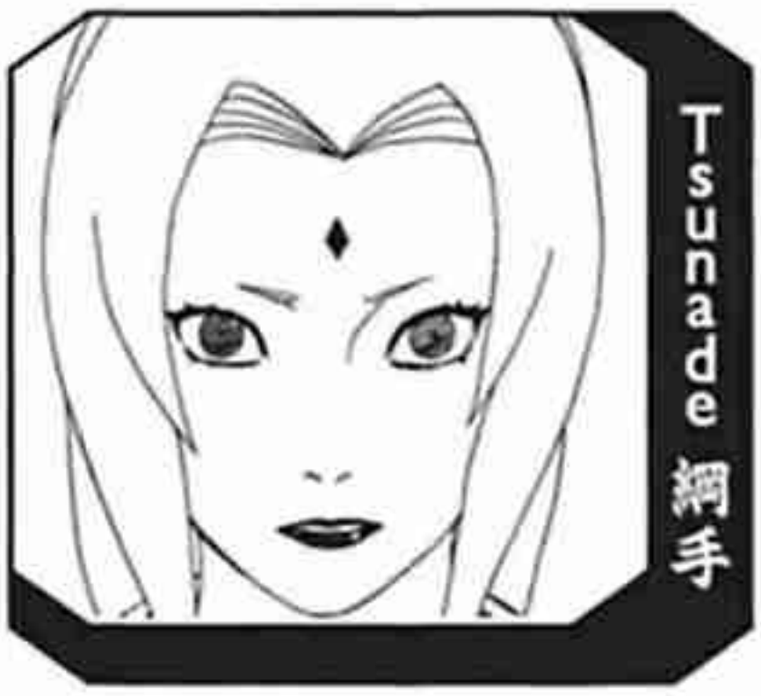
Sasuke サスケ

Kakashi カカシ

Sakura サクラ

Sai サイ

Yamato ヤマト


Tsunade 綱手

Jiraiya 自来也

THE STORY SO FAR...

Naruto, the biggest troublemaker at the Ninja Academy in the Village of Konohagakure, finally becomes a ninja along with his classmates Sasuke and Sakura. They grow and mature through countless trials and battles. However, Sasuke, unable to give up his quest for vengeance, leaves Konohagakure to seek Orochimaru and his power...

Two years pass. Naruto grows up and engages in fierce battles against the tailed beast-targeting Akatsuki. Elsewhere, after winning the heroic battle against Itachi and learning his older brother's true intentions, Sasuke allies with the Akatsuki and sets out to destroy Konoha!

Thanks to Naruto's actions, the crisis of the village's destruction comes to an end, but Danzo of the Black Ops is appointed Sixth Hokage in Tsunade's place. Amidst all this, the Raikage's summons goes out and a Gokage Summit is set to begin!

NARUTO

VOL. 49
THE GOKAGE SUMMIT COMMENCES

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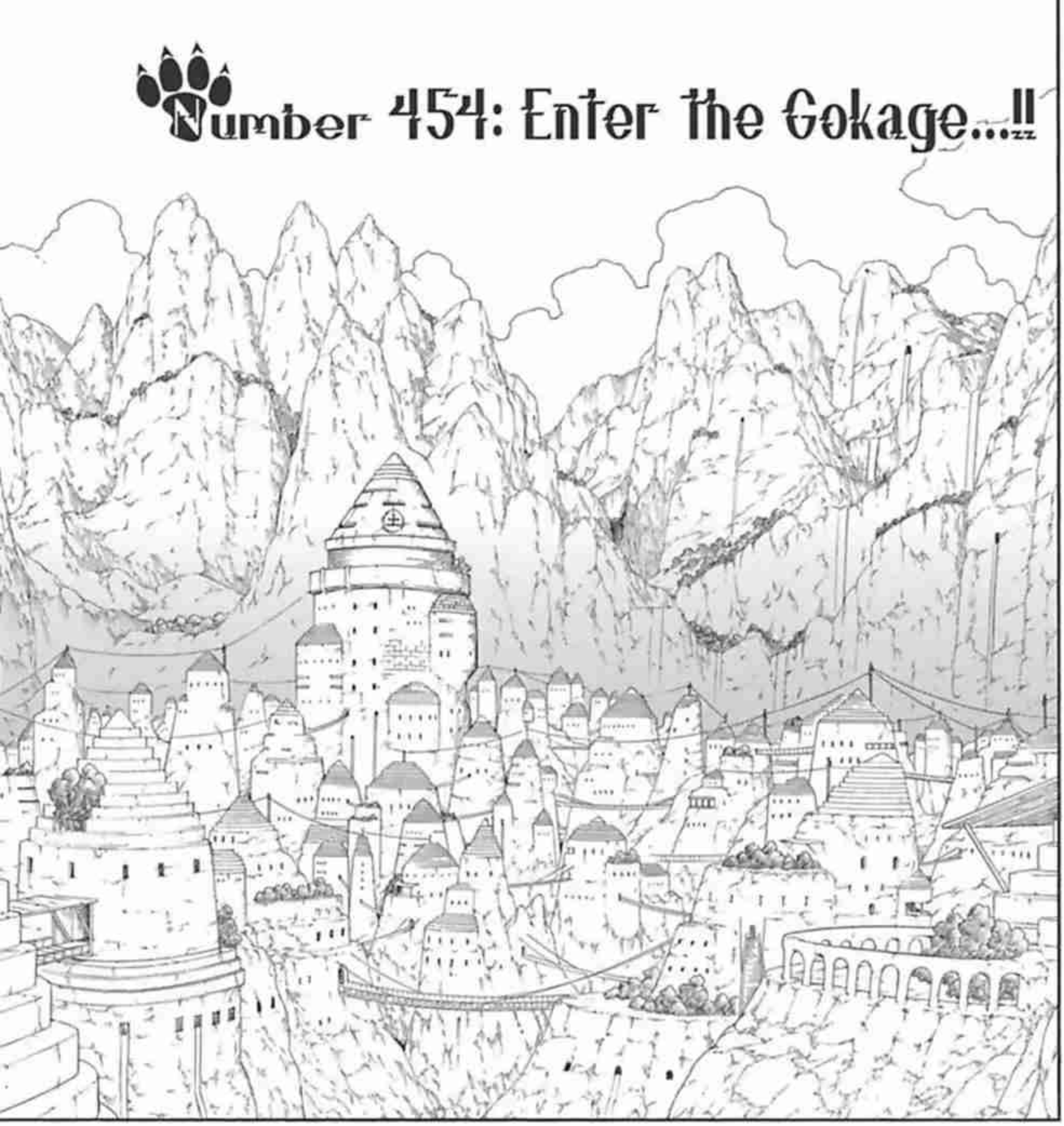
Number 454: Enter the Gokage...!!

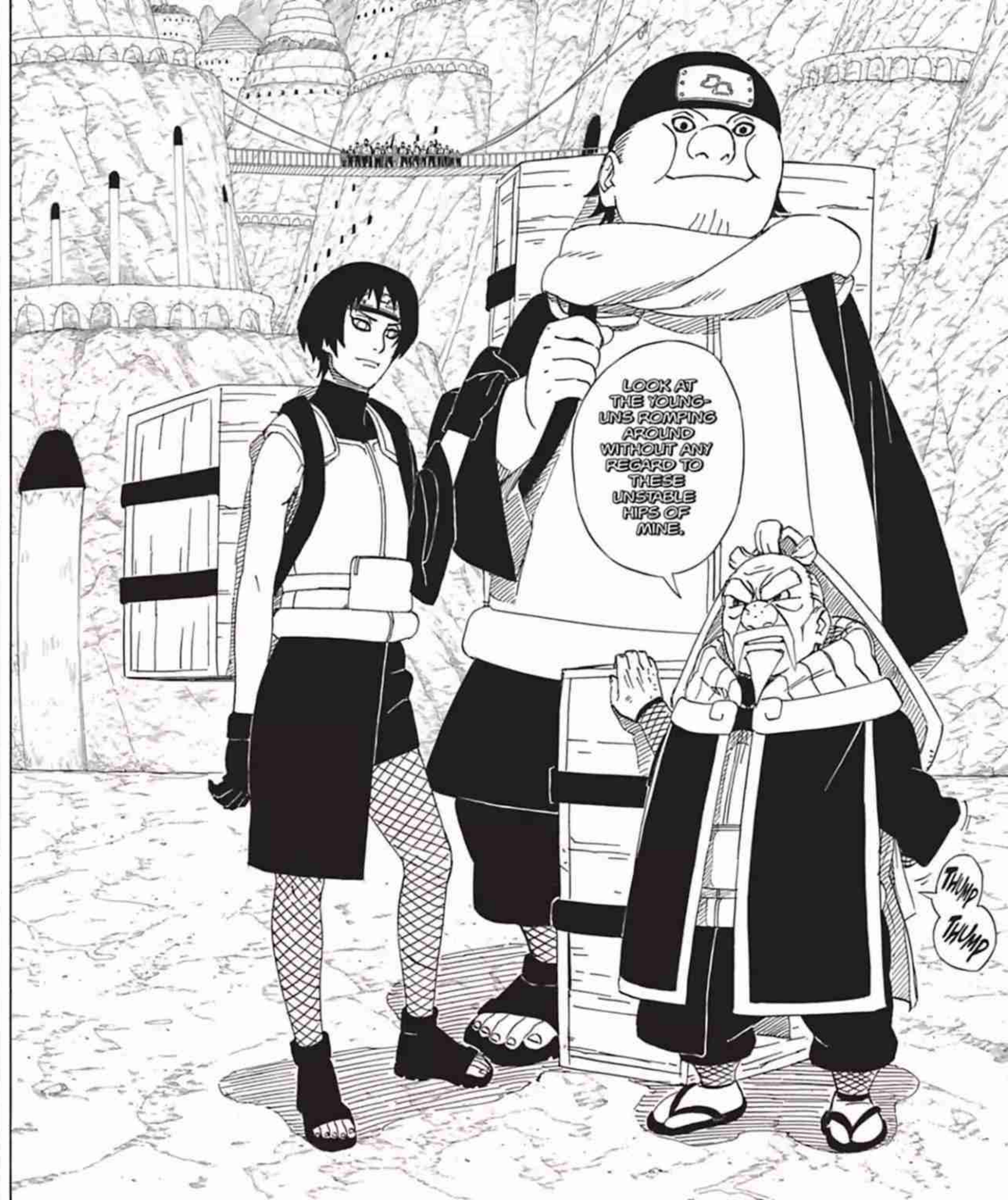


A-HAHAHA. DON'T WORRY, I'LL CARRY YOUR PACKS FOR YOU, LORD TSUCHIKAGE!
FSH

WHY DRAG OUT THE GLORY?
WHY DON'T YOU RETIRE, GRAMPS?

DON'T TOUCH 'EM, AKATSUCHI!
DONK!
MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS!!

CHAK


LOOK AT THE YOUNG-UNS ROMPING AROUND WITHOUT ANY REGARD TO THESE UNSTABLE HIPS OF MINE.
THUMP THUMP

WELL? WANNA SEND SOMEONE ELSE?
AAAA-ARGH !!! MY HIP!!!

GA
K

I AM TSUCHIKAGE OHNOKI, ONCE FEARED AS THE GREAT FENCE SITTER OF IWAGAKURE !!
F-FOOL! WHO DO YOU THINK I AM?!

VERY WELL. CARRY YOUR OWN PACKS IF YOU WISH.
NOW LET'S GET GOING.
TMP
?

HUMPH! I SHALL CARRY MY OWN PACKS!!

GAH... STUBBORN GEEZER!
FSH

TAP
QUEE
QUEE...
TAP
SSH...
THANK YOU VERY MUCH...
FSH
I KNOW.
DON'T LET THE HONORABLE MIZUKAGE OVERDO IT.
WE ARE ENTRUSTING THE HONORABLE MIZUKAGE TO YOUR CARE.
QUEE...
QUEE

READ THIS WAY
Y-YES, SIR... WE'LL BE FINE...
...I HOPE...
AS ONE OF THE SEVEN NINJA SWORDSMEN, DEFEND LADY MIZUKAGE FAITHFULLY, YOU GET ME?
HO HO HO...
YOU SHOULD HAVE MORE CONFIDENCE.
YOU'RE STRONG.
SHE'S SO KIND.
AH... YES, MA'AM...
I'LL DO MY BEST...
...I HOPE...
...OKAY, CHOJURO ?
WHICH IS WHY I CHOSE YOU TO ESCORT ME TO THE SUMMIT...
I SWEAR UPON MY TITLE OF MIZUKAGE TO CARRY OUT MY DUTIES WITH BRILLIANCE.
...LORD GREAT ELDER ...

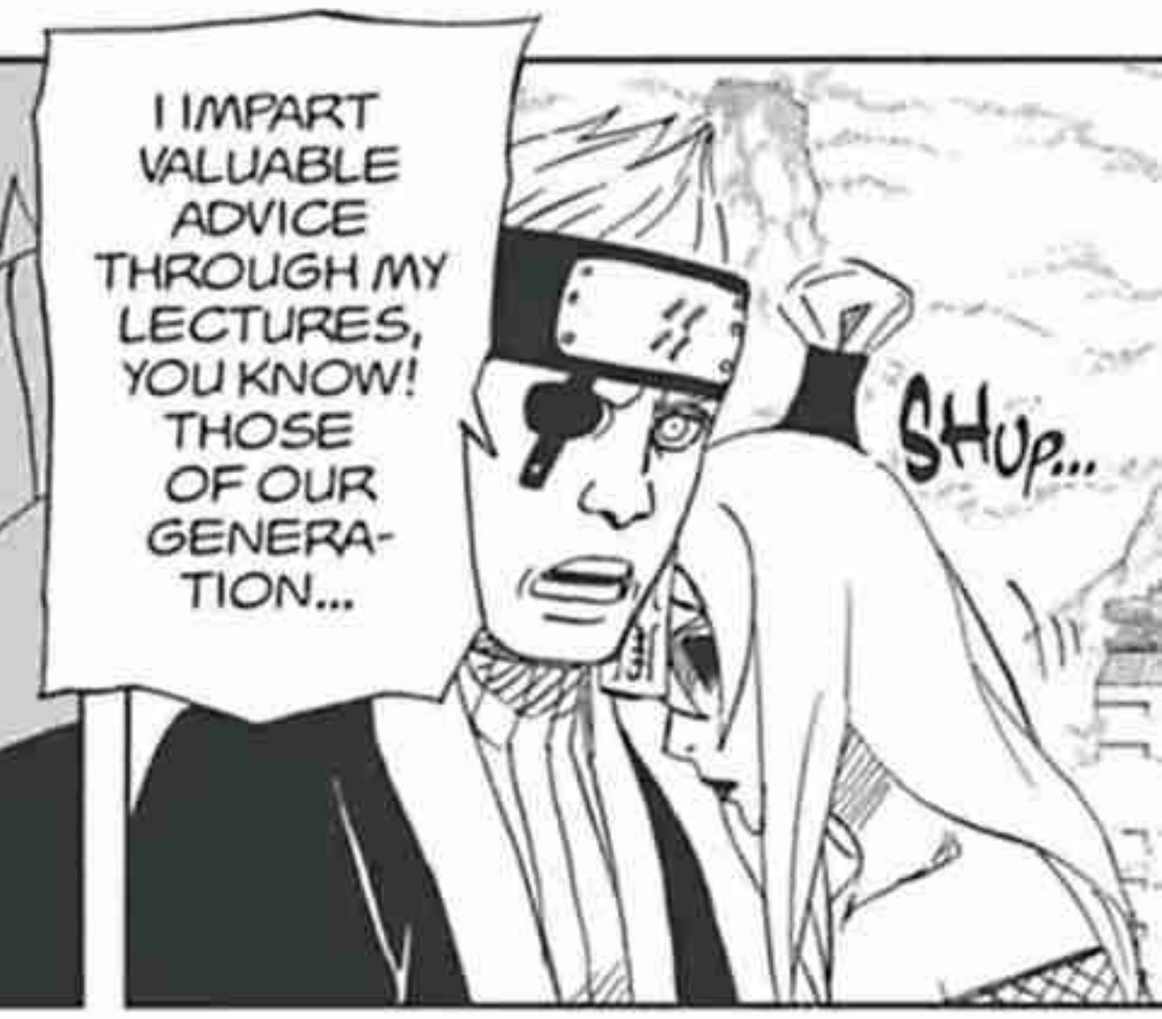
OLD MAID ...?

I SWEAR, YOUTH THESE DAYS ARE JUST ALL MADE OF WEAKER—
YES, MA'AM SHOULD BE YOUR ONLY RESPONSE THERE! SUCH SPINELESS-NESS IS WORSE THAN USELESS!
URK

OLD MAID... SOON ?!!

AO... QUIT LECTURING! YOU'LL BE LATE TO THE SUMMIT IF YOU DON'T GET GOING SOON!

SHUT UP, OR I WILL KILL YOU.


I IMPART VALUABLE ADVICE THROUGH MY LECTURES, YOU KNOW! THOSE OF OUR GENERA-TION...
SHUP...

READ THIS WAY
I SHALL DEFEND KIND LADY MIZUKAGE'S SMILE! ...TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITIES.
CHOJURO, AO... LET'S GET GOING.
KRAK
WHUP
HUH ...?
ENOUGH! I'M HEADING OUT TOO, THEN!
WHAM
SHE WILL EITHER RENDEZ-VOUS WITH YOU DIRECTLY OR SEND A MESSENGER BIRD.
SAMUI HAS ALREADY BEEN INFORMED OF THE ROUTE YOU WILL BE TAKING TO THE SUMMIT, LORD RAIKAGE.
NO, BUT I DO EXPECT TO HEAR SOME-THING SOON.
STILL NO WORD FROM SQUAD SAMUI?

SUUUURE.

YES, SIR!

COME ALONG !!!
RASH

NO THANKS... I'M TAKING THE STAIRS, LIKE NORMAL FOLK... GO ON AHEAD AND I'LL CATCH UP WITH YOU...
SHUP
WHOA!
LET'S GO, DARUI.

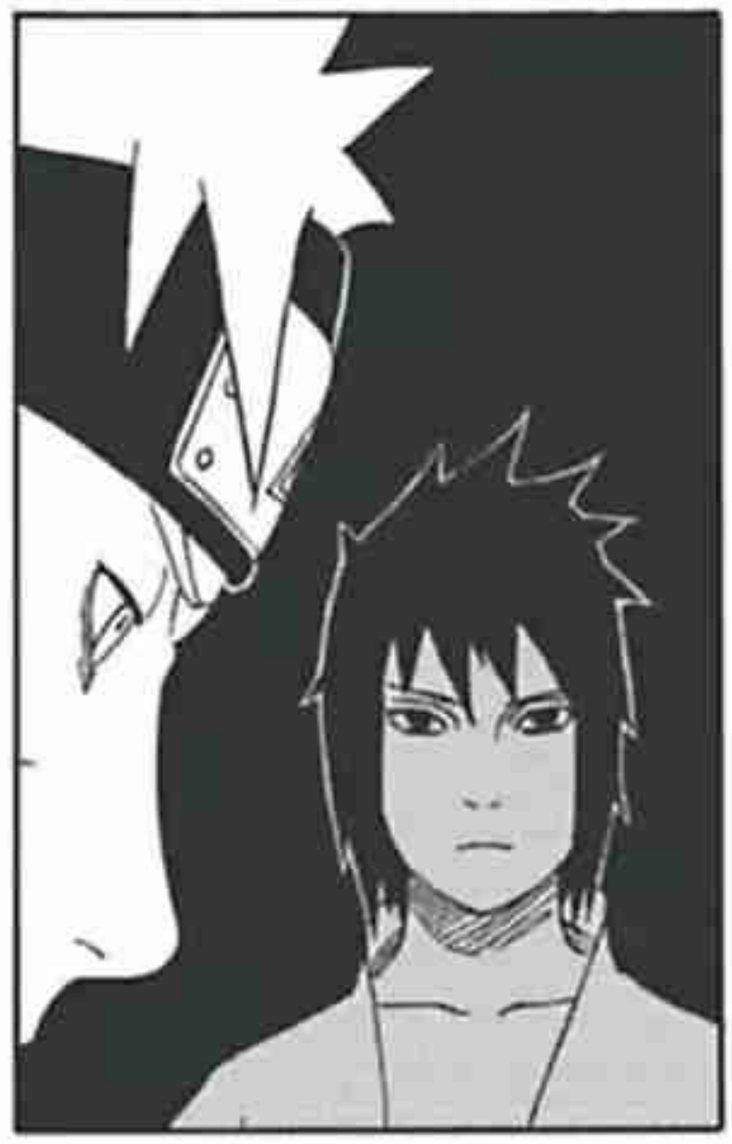
SIGH... NOT AGAIN!

SHUP
LET'S GO, SHEE! DARUI!!

NOW ...
...ABOUT SASUKE...
THUMP

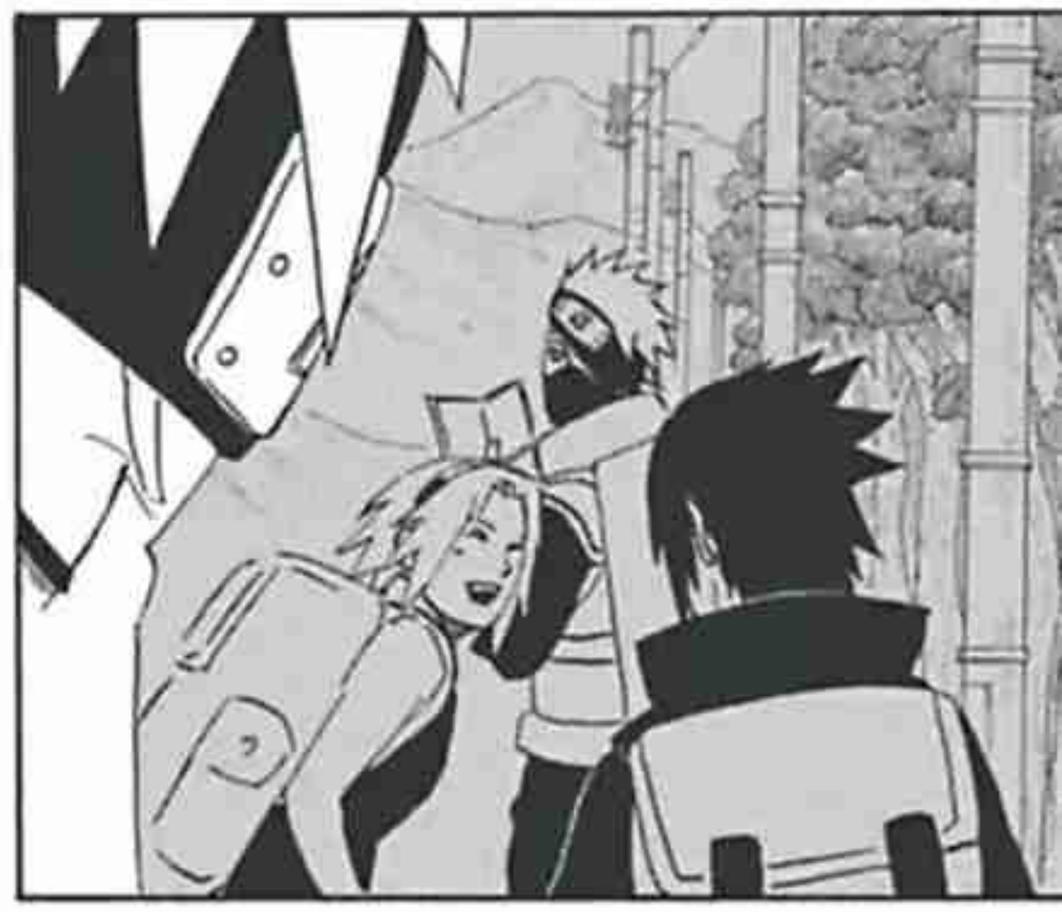
THIS SHOULD BE GOOD ENOUGH.

ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING ABOUT HIM.
TELL US WHAT YOU KNOW.



...

WHAT'S THE MATTER? SPILL IT!



I CAN'T SELL SASUKE OUT.

I CAN'T...

REEE...

WELL ?!

SAY SOME-THING!

...

...AND A VICIOUS CYCLE OF HATRED WILL BE SET IN MOTION.

AND IF ONE CALLS VEN-GEANCE JUSTICE, SUCH JUSTICE WILL JUST BREED FURTHER VEN-GEANCE ...

AND EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US BATTLES THAT HATRED.

A BATTLE AGAINST HATRED, THAT'S WHAT SHINOBI ARE.

YOU ...!

...BUT I WON'T SELL OUT SASUKE!

I KNOW I'M BEING SELFISH...

...

PEOPLE YOU LOVE WILL KEEP KILLING EACH OTHER!
EYE FOR AN EYE!
THE VICIOUS CYCLE WILL START ALL OVER AGAIN!

BUT IF YOU GUYS HATE ENOUGH TO KILL SASUKE, ME AND MY COMRADES ARE NOT GOING TO JUST SIT AROUND IN SILENCE!
I UNDER-STAND YOUR NEED FOR VENGEANCE!

HOW WOULD YOU TAKE RESPON-SIBILITY FOR IT?!
WHERE DO YOU SUGGEST WE TAKE OUR HATRED?

SO WHAT DO I CARE!!
BUT YOUR SASUKE IS THE ONE WHO STARTED IT ALL!!
I WANT SASUKE DEAD!!

...GET IT ALL OFF YOUR CHEST.
BEAT ME UP INSTEAD...
I OFFER MYSELF ...

...

THO-O-O

LET'S TEST YOUR THEORY. SEE IF I CAN REALLY GET IT OFF MY CHEST!

WHUNK

GET OFF YOUR HIGH HORSE !!

GAH!

WHUMP

...

THWA

THWA

UNH!

CLO

O

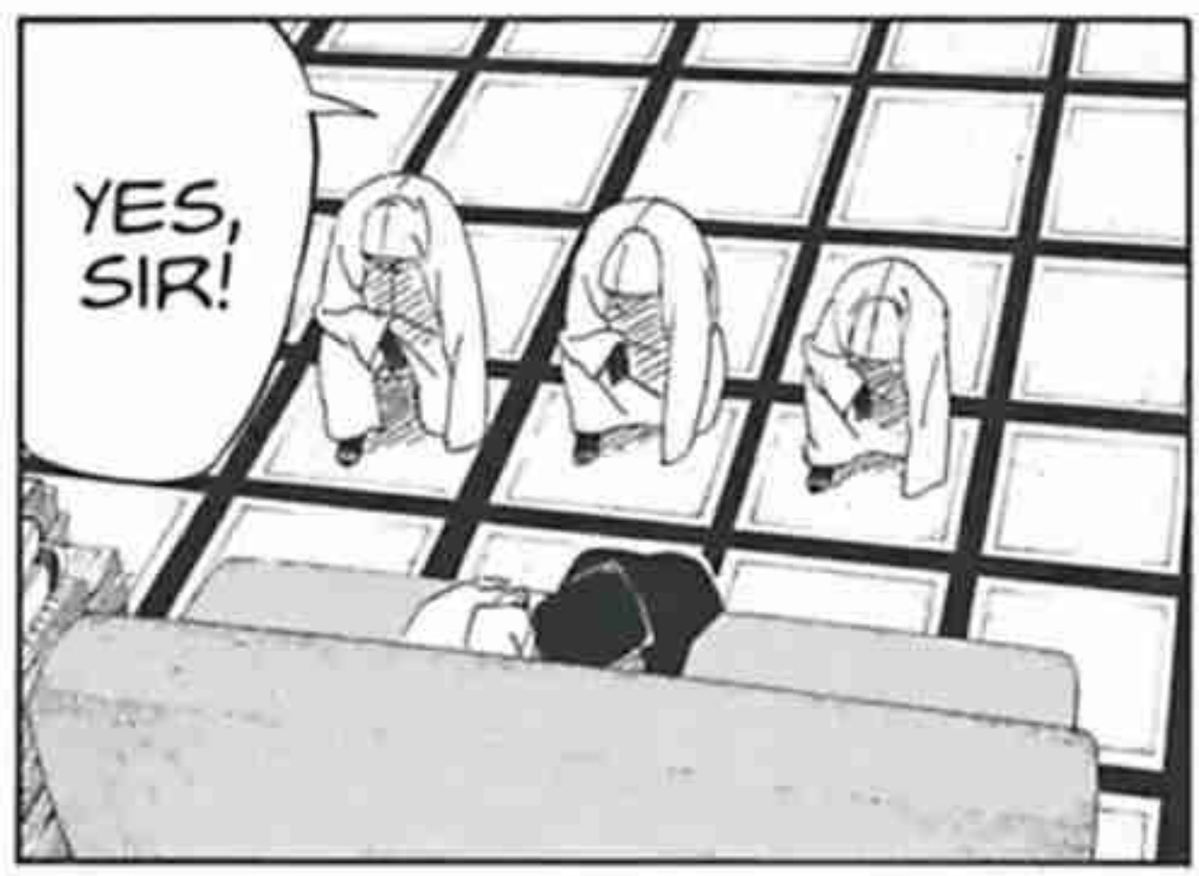
READ THIS WAY
WE ARE AT A CRUCIAL JUNCTURE ...
I'D LIKE TO AVOID ANY ERROR THAT WOULD WORSEN OUR CIRCUM-STANCES.
...DO WE MOVE TO ELIMINATE ANKO?
I'VE SENT TWO OF MY BEST, DAJIM AND TERA, AFTER ANKO.
...WE MUST OBTAIN IT.
KABUTO POSSESSES ALL OF OROCHIMARU'S HUMAN EXPERI-MENTATION DATA...
THAT ROGUE... HE MAY KNOW OF MY RELATION-SHIP WITH OROCHI-MARU...
INCREASE THE NUMBER OF ACTIVE PERSONNEL.
AND MAKE CAPTURING KABUTO A HIGHER PRIORITY THAN ANKO.
KLAK
I AM SURE IT WILL BE MOST USEFUL IN REGARDS TO MY RIGHT EYE AND ARM.

Number 455: Links...!!

TERAI, I LEAVE KABUTO'S CAPTURE TO YOU...

GO.

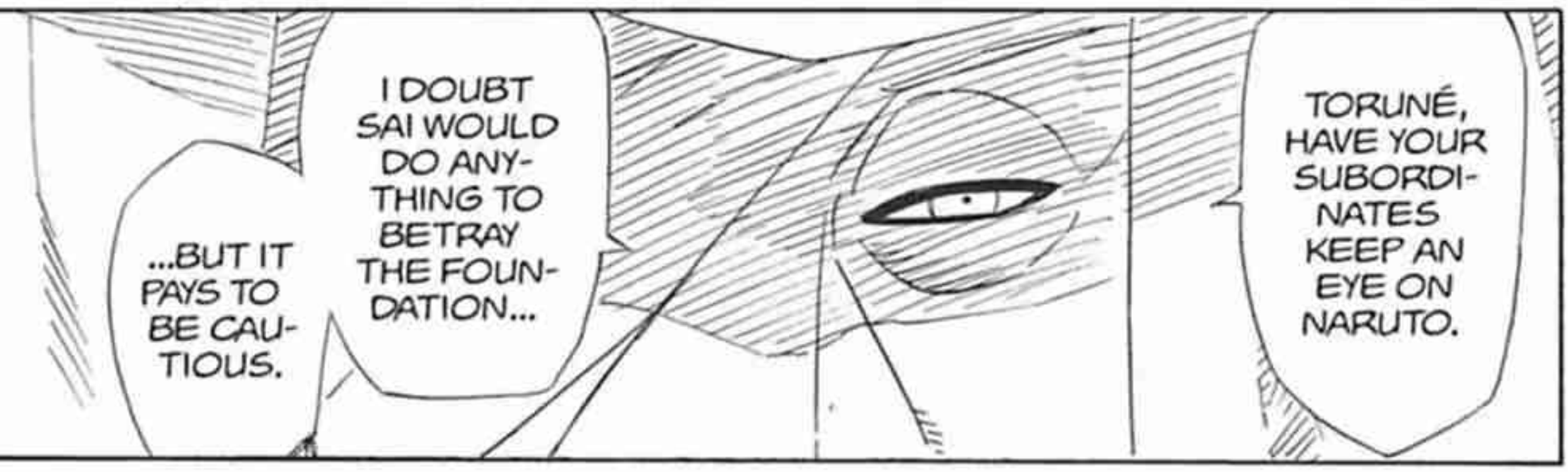
FOO, TORUNÉ, YOU TWO STAY HERE.



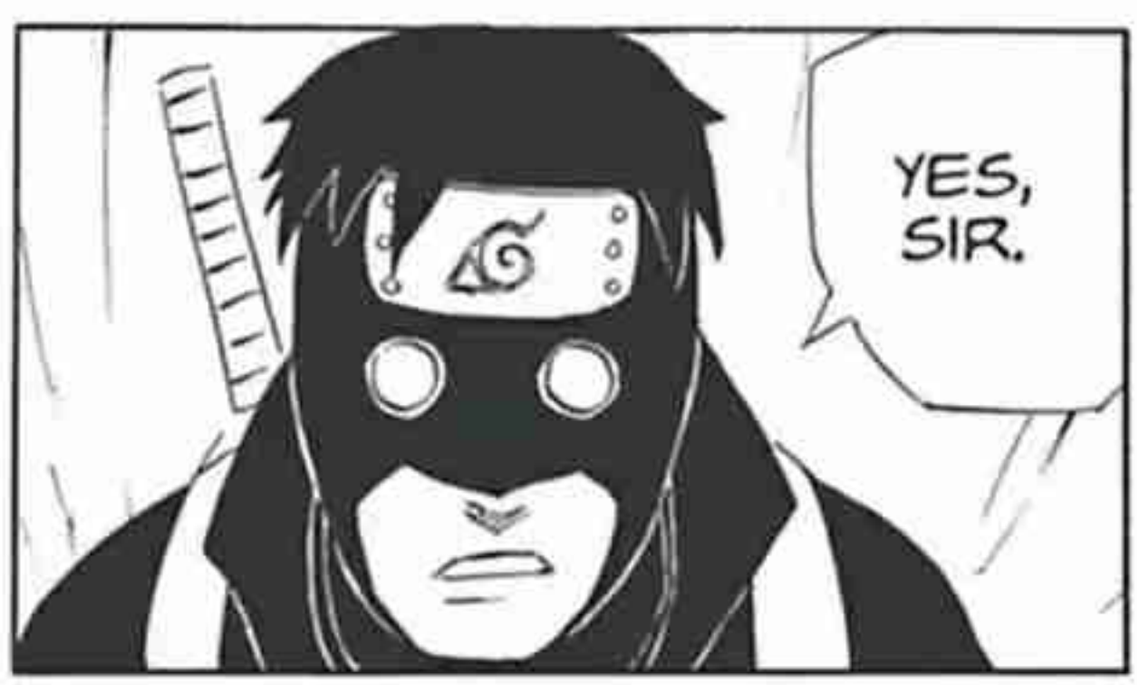
WHAT

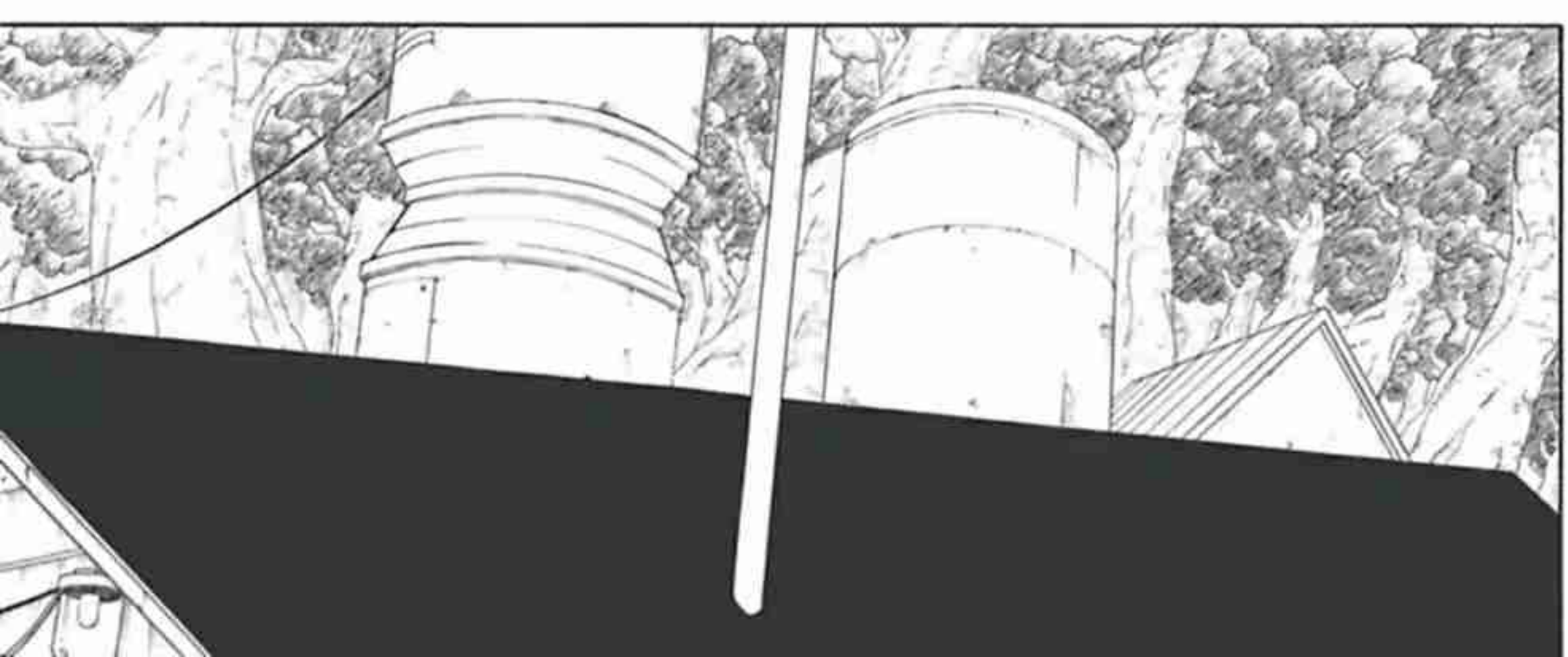
YES, SIR.
CREAK...
DO NOT CONCERN YOURSELF WITH ANY LIMITATIONS, FOO. I TRUST YOUR DISCRETION.

WHAT LEVEL OF ARMS ARE WE ALLOWED FOR YOUR PROTEC-TION...?


...BUT IT PAYS TO BE CAU-TIOUS.
I DOUBT SAI WOULD DO ANY-THING TO BETRAY THE FOUN-DATION...
TORUNÉ, HAVE YOUR SUBORDI-NATES KEEP AN EYE ON NARUTO.

MAKE SURE THEY UNDERSTAND NOT TO LET THE NINE TAILS LEAVE THE VILLAGE.


YES, SIR.



HUF
HUF
HUF

SH
HUF...

HUF
HUF
PLOP

I'M JUST GOING TO KEEP GOING UNTIL YOU SPILL IT ABOUT SASUKE!
I'M WARNING YOU!
NO AMOUNT OF PUMMELING IS GOING TO MAKE ME FEEL BETTER!

...

TAK
RAAAR!
WAP!
...
HE HIMSELF ASKED FOR THIS.
DON'T INTER-FERE.
CLENCH
STAY OUT OF THIS.
...SAI...
?!!
!!

NARUTO ...

...THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO GET BEAT UP ON SASUKE'S BEHALF.

AND I KNOW THAT YOU KNOW IT!
THAT'S ENOUGH, KARUI!
KNOCKING THESE GUYS AROUND ISN'T GOING TO GET US ANYWHERE.

?!
WHA

WHIRL
FWAP
FWAP
GAH...!

NARUTO ...
SHUP

WHAT? YOU'RE NOT GOING TO QUESTION IF HE REALLY, REALLY MEANS IT, LIKE YOU ALWAYS DO?
YOU'RE USUALLY SO OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE!
HE SWORE HE WOULD HELP US RESCUE LORD KILLER BEE.

WUMP
REAL MEN DO NOT CHOOSE THEIR WORDS LIGHTLY.

EVEN IF HE IS AN ENEMY, I ACTUALLY KINDA LIKE A GUY...
...WHO WILL NEVER SELL OUT HIS COMRADES ...

OMOI, KARUI. HOW GOES THE INTEL-GATHERING?
OH! CAPTAIN SAMUI.
TMP

HE WON'T SELL OUT SASUKE NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO TO HIM.
HE'S THE TYPE THAT NEVER GOES BACK ON HIS WORD.

LET'S HUNT DOWN THE AKATSUKI HIDE-OUTS!
NEVER MIND THAT. LORD KILLER BEE MAY STILL BE ALIVE!
LET'S GO SAVE HIM!

YOU WEREN'T CAUSING TROUBLE, WERE YOU?
...

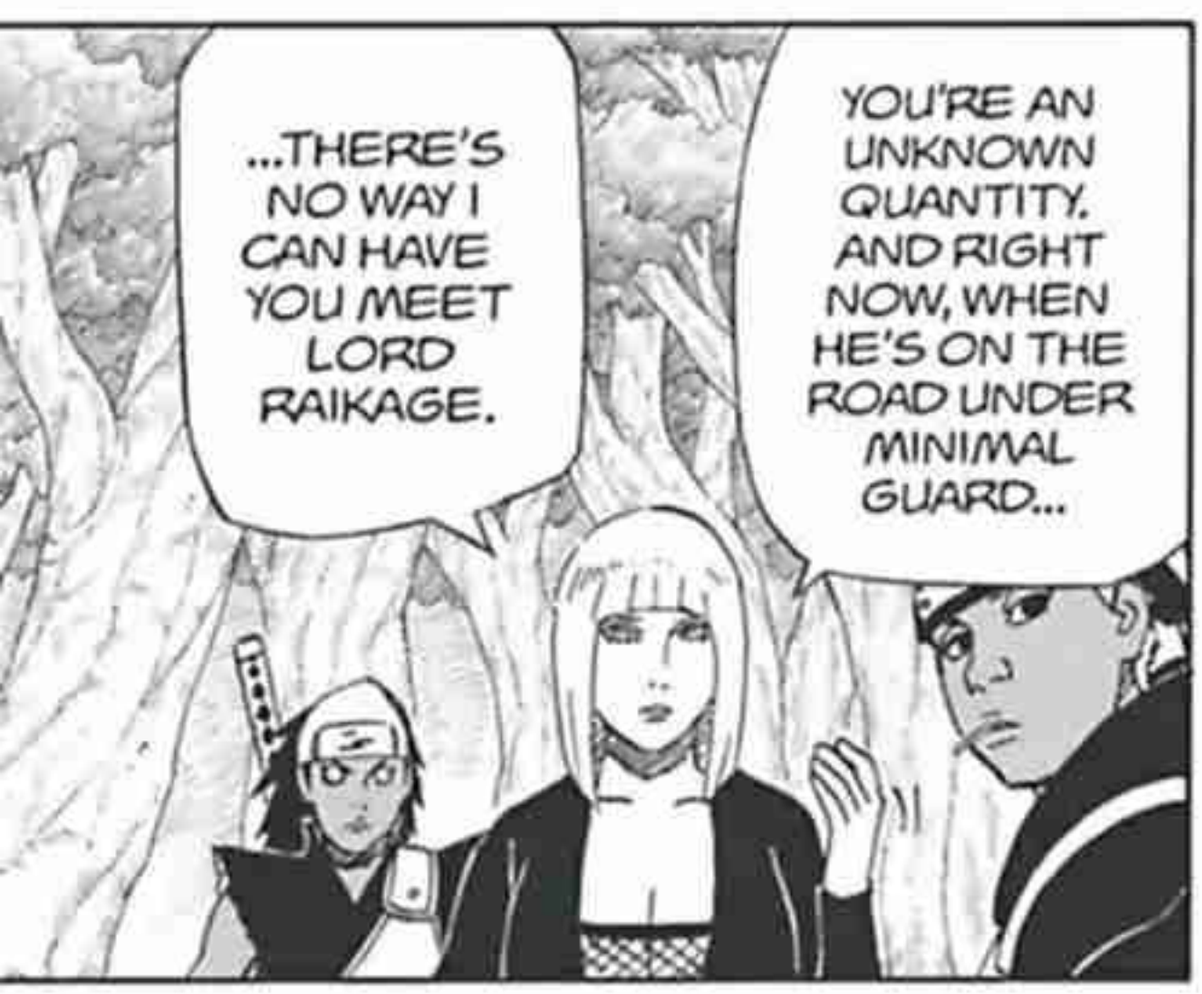
!

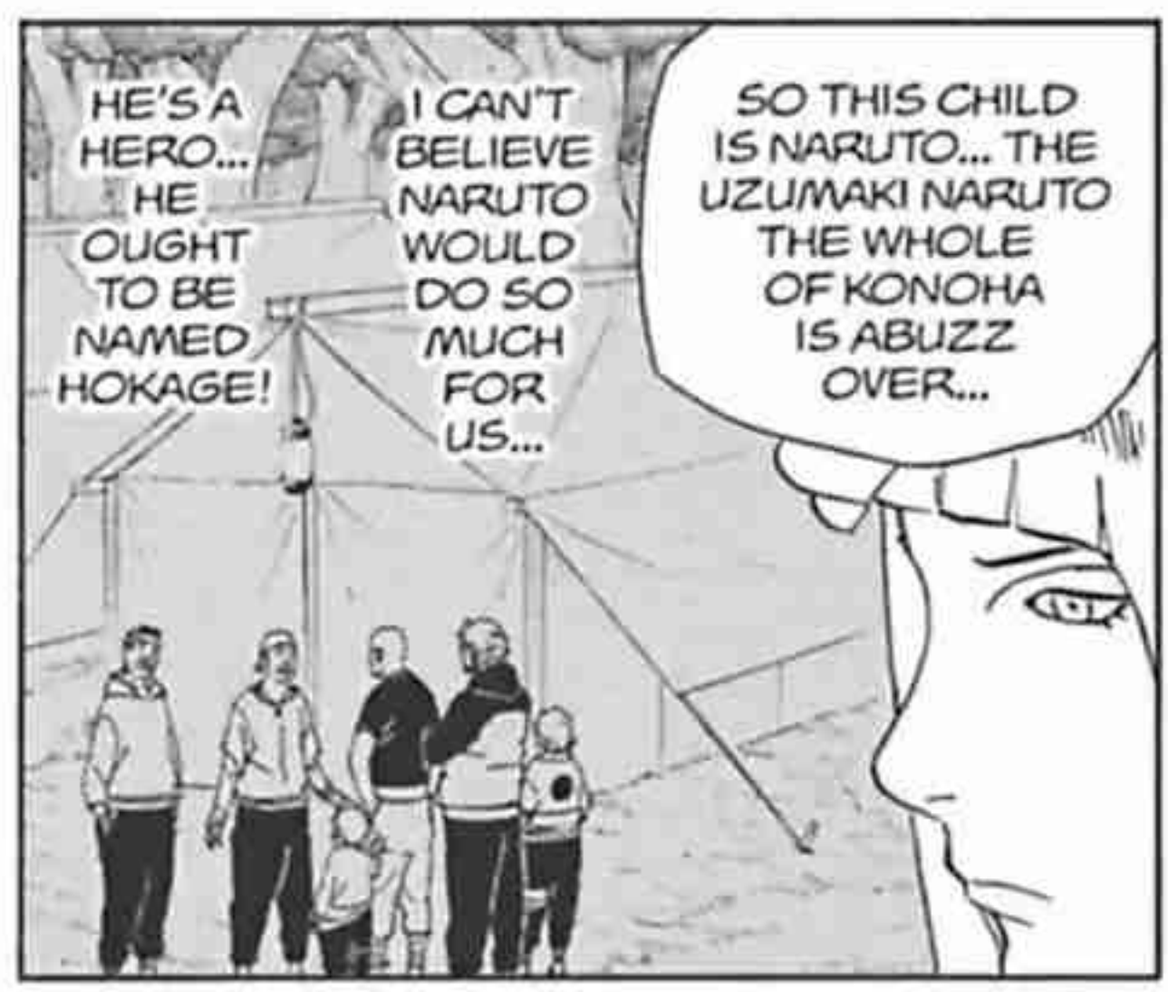
TAKE... ME TOO... PLEASE...
WE'LL TAKE KONOHA'S DATA DIRECTLY TO LORD RAIKAGE!
...I'D... LIKE TO HELP YOU RESCUE YOUR JINCHŪRIKI...
ESPECIALLY SINCE THERE'S SO MUCH OF IT.

ARE YOU SUGGESTING WE JUST GO CHECK OUT THE WHO-KNOWS-HOW-MANY AKATSUKI HIDE-OUTS ONE BY ONE?
WE CAN'T GO IN ALONE. THESE PEOPLE CAPTURED LORD KILLER BEE...
AND THEN ...?
WE MUSTN'T REPEAT THE ERRORS WE MADE WITH YUGITO.
WE NEED INTEL. WE NEED ANALYSIS FIRST. IT'LL SAVE US TROUBLE AND TIME!

KARUI ...
TALK TO LORD RAIKAGE? ARE YOU JOKING?!
SSH

AND THERE'S... SOMETHING... I'D LIKE TO TALK TO THE RAIKAGE ABOUT...
NARUTO!


...THERE'S NO WAY I CAN HAVE YOU MEET LORD RAIKAGE.
YOU'RE AN UNKNOWN QUANTITY. AND RIGHT NOW, WHEN HE'S ON THE ROAD UNDER MINIMAL GUARD...


HE'S A HERO... HE OUGHT TO BE NAMED HOKAGE!
I CAN'T BELIEVE NARUTO WOULD DO SO MUCH FOR US...
SO THIS CHILD IS NARUTO... THE UZUMAKI NARUTO THE WHOLE OF KONOHA IS ABUZZ OVER...

WHAT IS IT?
SAI...
TAK
TAKE ME... TO MASTER KAKASHI AND CAPTAIN YAMATO...

IT'S GOING TO TAKE TIME TO COPY IT ALL, SO I NEED YOU TWO TO HELP ME.
NOW, KARUI, OMOI, LET'S GO! I'VE RECEIVED PERMISSION TO INSPECT THE INTEL ON SASUKE AND THE AKATSUKI.
SHUP

...

YOU OUGHT TO HAVE SAKURA TREAT THESE WOUNDS...

...

BESIDES, I HEAL FAST.
IF SHE SEES ME LIKE THIS, IT'LL JUST CAUSE MORE TROUBLE.

...

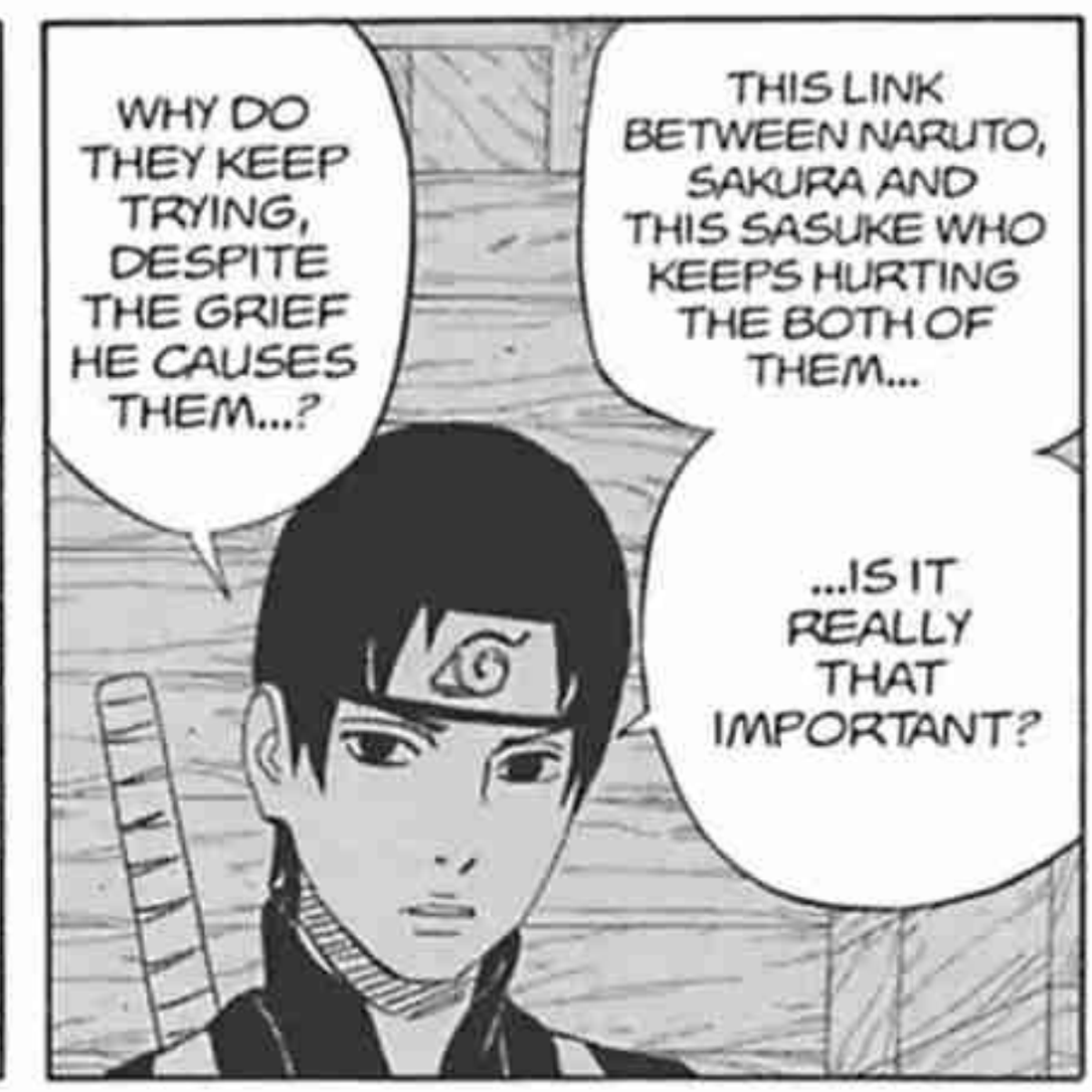
NO PROB-LEM...
ZING...

!
THANKS.
SAI... ABOUT EARLIER...

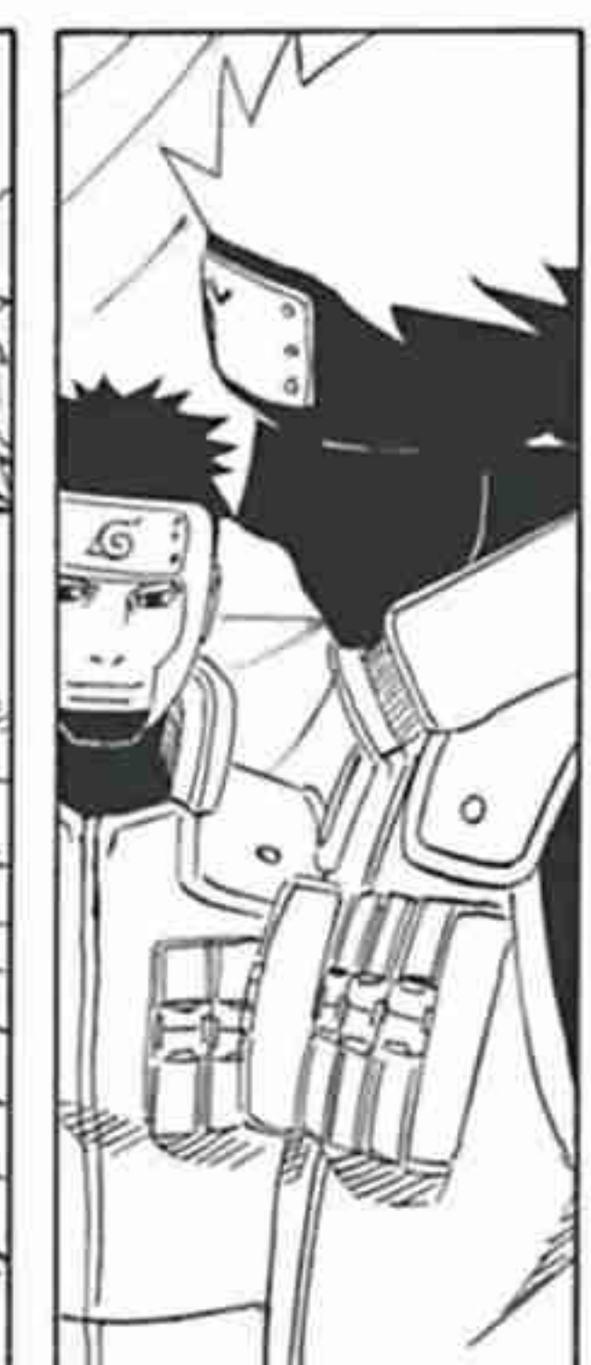
MASTER KAKASHI?
I SEE... SO THAT'S WHAT REALLY HAPPENED ...
HMM?

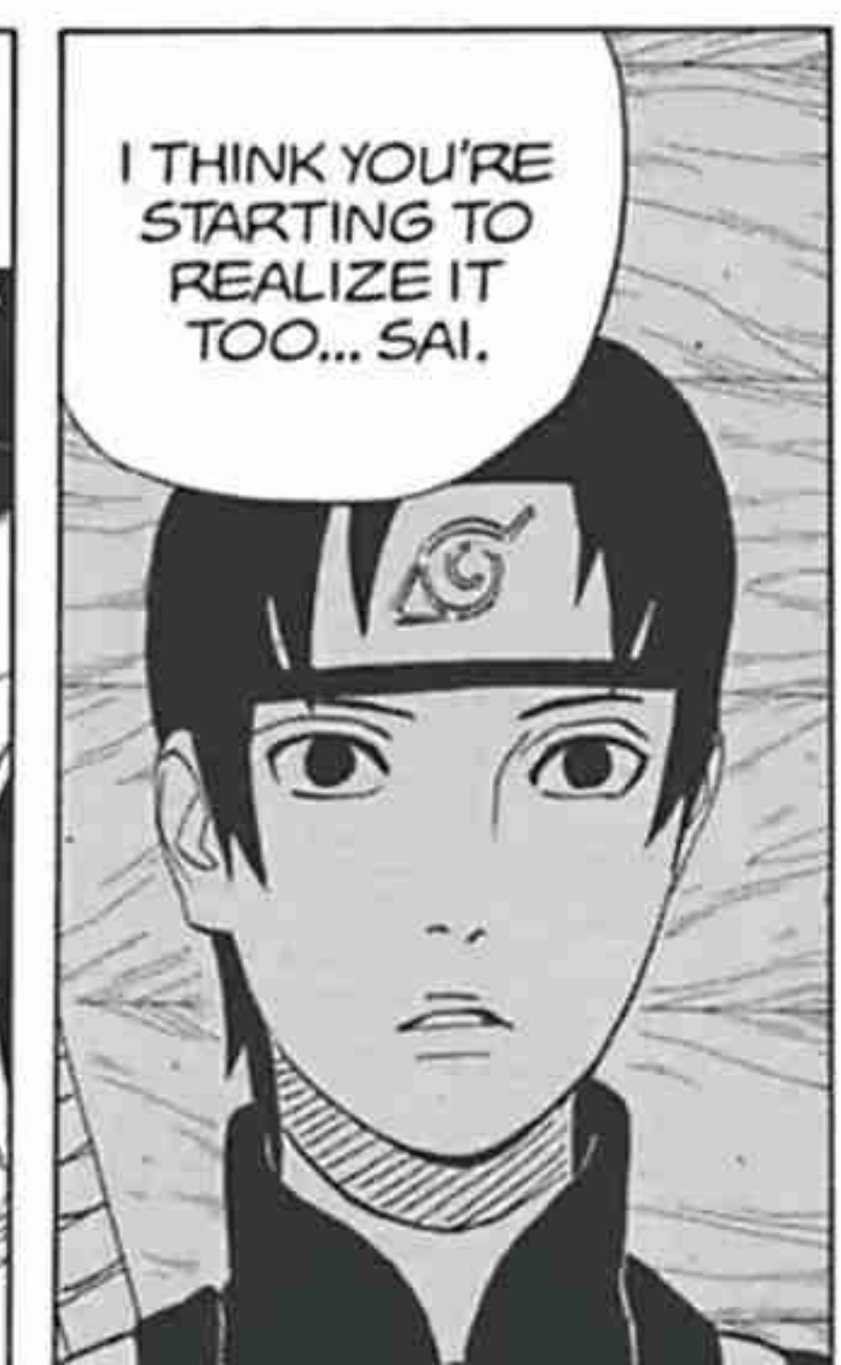
HEH HEH...
YOU SURE GOT BEAT UP PRETTY BADLY.

RELAX... IT'S ALL RIGHT...
...TH-THAT'S ...!!
SAI... YOU'RE WATCHING NARUTO FOR DANZO, RIGHT?
...JUMPING IN TO HELP NARUTO ISN'T SOMETHING A LOOKOUT DOES.


WHY DO THEY KEEP TRYING, DESPITE THE GRIEF HE CAUSES THEM...?
THIS LINK BETWEEN NARUTO, SAKURA AND THIS SASUKE WHO KEEPS HURTING THE BOTH OF THEM...
...IS IT REALLY THAT IMPORTANT?

S-SORRY.
OWWW!




I THINK YOU'RE STARTING TO REALIZE IT TOO... SAI.

?!

I'M GONNA GO SEE THE RAIKAGE !!

NOW, YOU NEED TO TAKE IT EASY FOR A LITTLE BIT...

I'M GONNA CONVINCE HIM TO FORGIVE SASUKE!

THE GOKAGE SUMMIT'S ABOUT TO BEGIN!

EVERY HIDDEN SHINOBI VILLAGE IS EXPECTED TO CURTAIL EXCURSIONS AND UNNECESSARY MISSIONS OUTSIDE THEIR VILLAGE!

AND THEN WHAT?

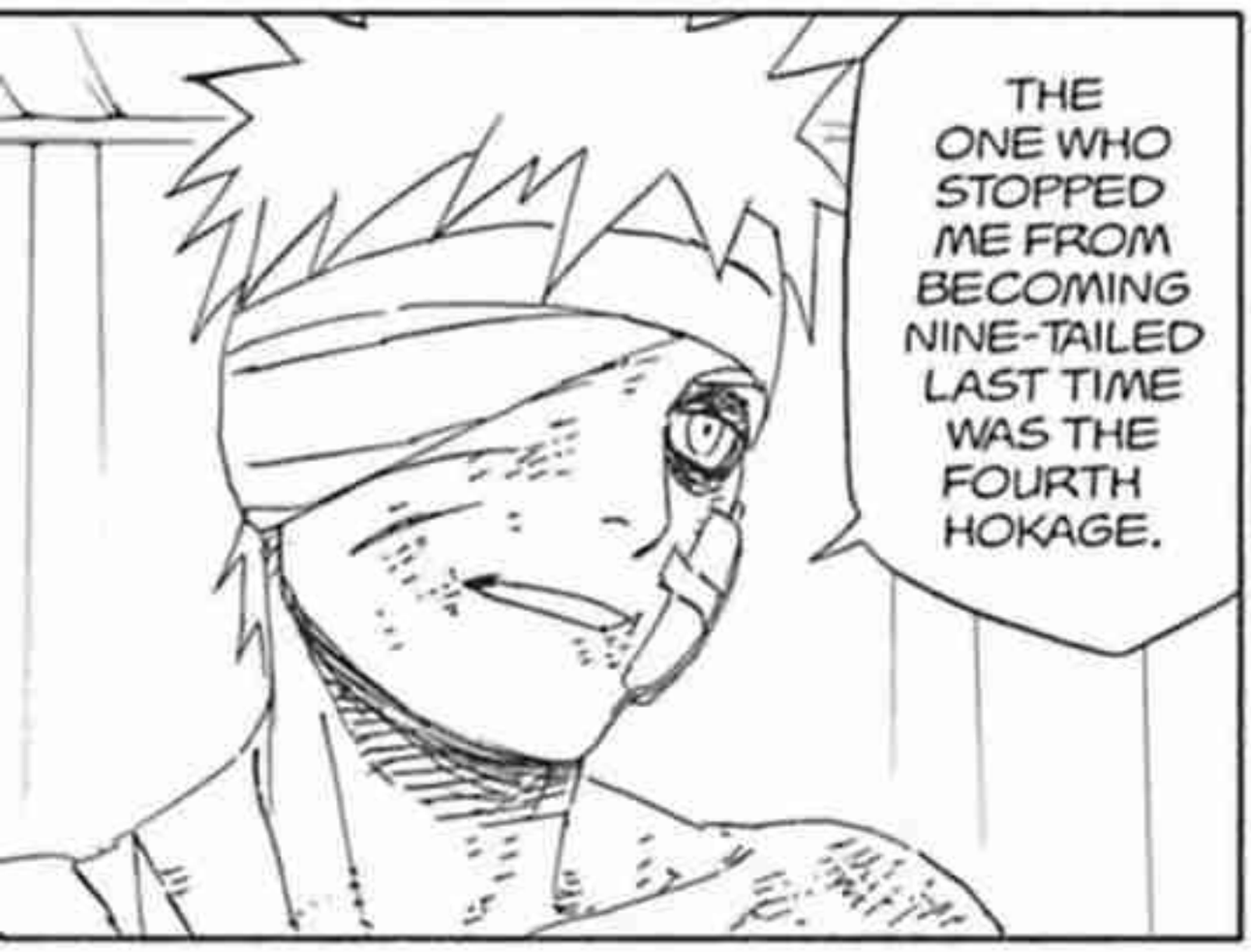
I SAW THE FOURTH HOKAGE.

AND I CAN'T STICK TO YOU EVERY MINUTE, HAVING BEEN ASSIGNED THE TASK OF RECONSTRUCTING THE VILLAGE!

DURING THAT LAST BATTLE, YOU SPROUTED THE EIGHTH TAIL!

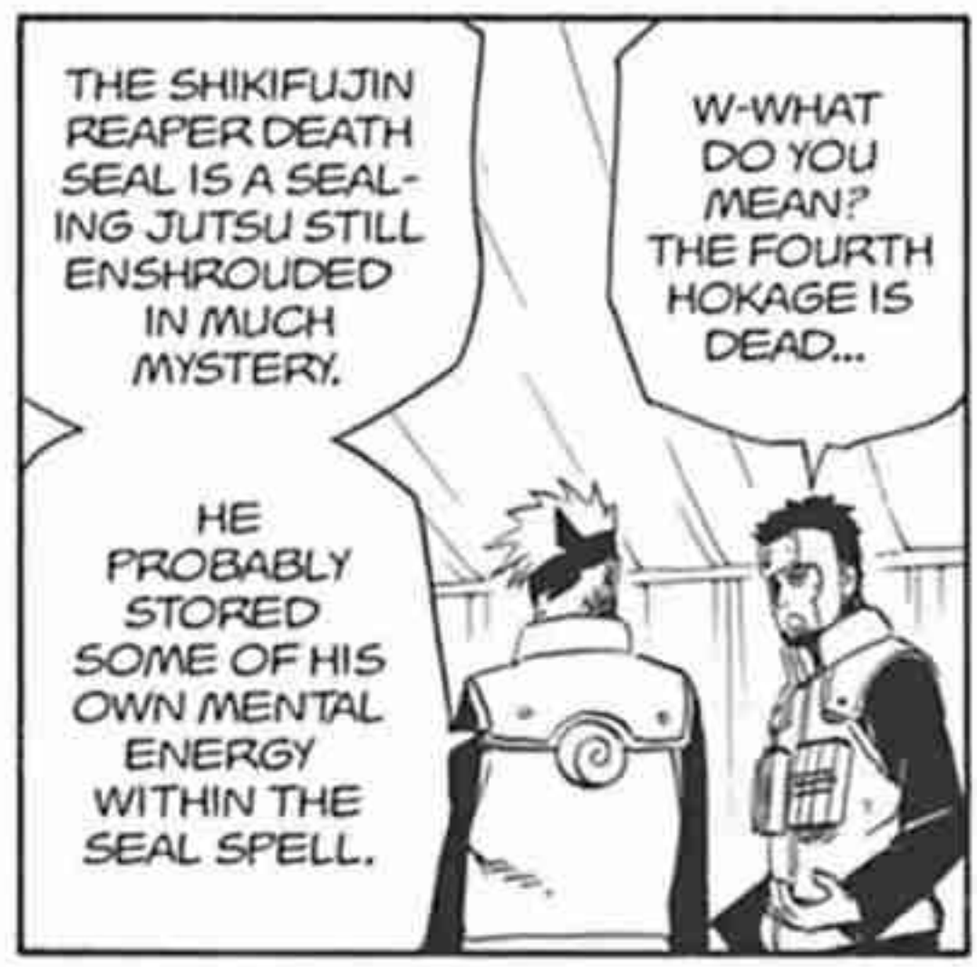
YOU NO LONGER HAVE THE SEALING NECKLACE! YOU, AS THE JINCHÛRIKI, MUSTN'T GO BEYOND THE VILLAGE BOUNDARIES!

LUCKILY, THE SEAL KICKED IN AND SUPPRESSED NINE TAILS, BUT WHO KNOWS WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT TIME?!


THE ONE WHO STOPPED ME FROM BECOMING NINE-TAILED LAST TIME WAS THE FOURTH HOKAGE.

?!!
?

THE AKATSUKI GUY WHO WEARS A MASK WAS BEHIND THAT NINE TAILS MESS 16 YEARS AGO!
HE'S SO STRONG EVEN THE FOURTH HOKAGE STRUGGLED AGAINST HIM!
THAT'S WHEN THE FOURTH HOKAGE TOLD ME...

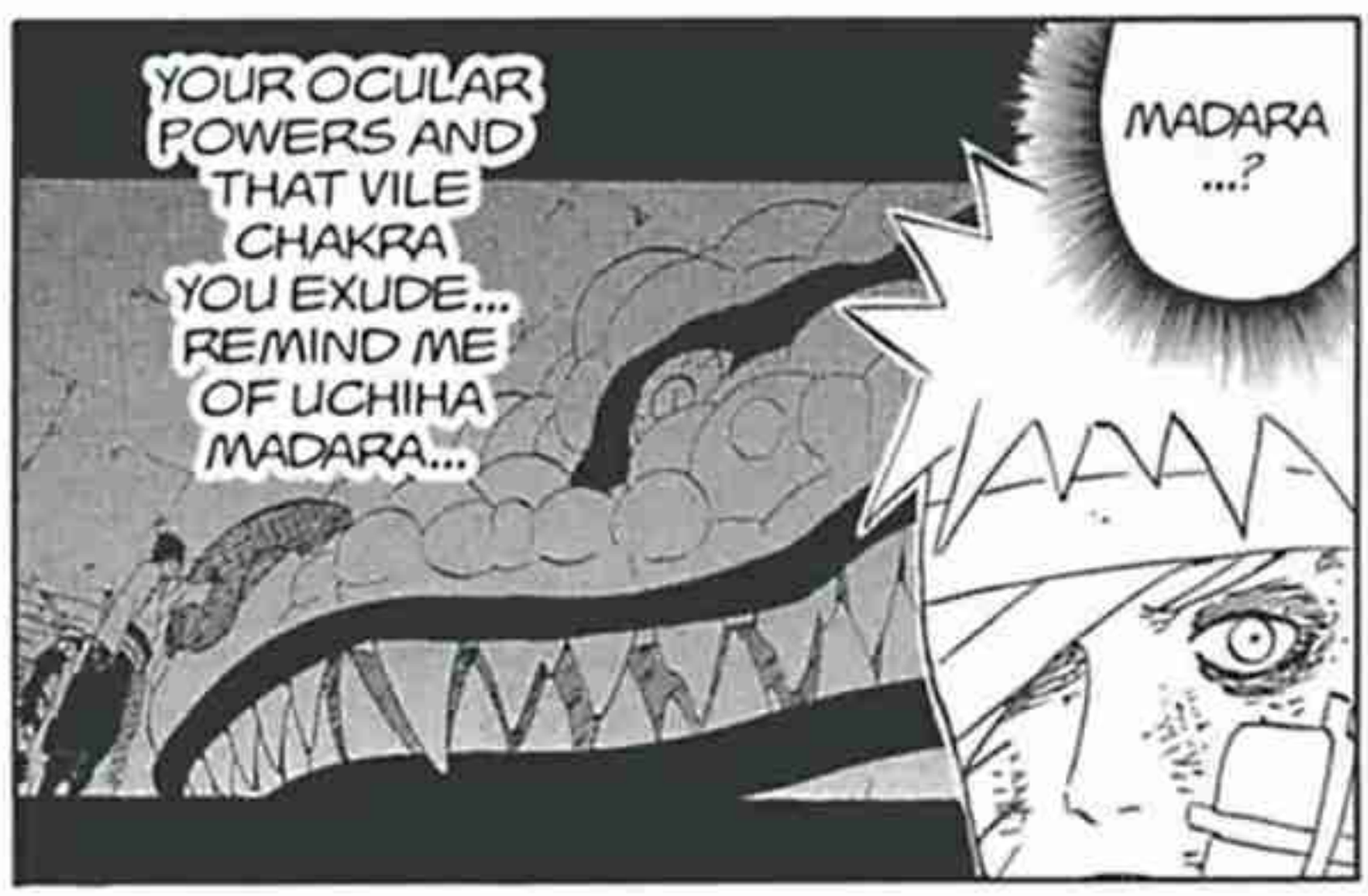

THE SHIKIFUJIN REAPER DEATH SEAL IS A SEALING JUTSU STILL ENSHROUDED IN MUCH MYSTERY.
HE PROBABLY STORED SOME OF HIS OWN MENTAL ENERGY WITHIN THE SEAL SPELL.
W-WHAT DO YOU MEAN? THE FOURTH HOKAGE IS DEAD...

AND SASUKE'S JOINING THE AKATSUKI MEANS HE'S USING SASUKE TOO!
FOURTH HOKAGE SAID THE MASKED ONE IS PULLING THE STRINGS.
PAIN WAS JUST BEING USED BY THAT GUY!

!

...AND A GRUDGE AGAINST THE VILLAGE.
HE BEARS A SHARIN-GAN...
THE ONLY ROGUE OF THE UCHIHA CLAN CAPABLE OF SUMMONING NINE TAILS IS MADARA.

I CAN'T BELIEVE... THAT THAT FELLOW WAS BEHIND THE INCIDENT 16 YEARS AGO.
IT'S JUST AS LORD JIRAIYA FEARED.


YOUR OCULAR POWERS AND THAT VILE CHAKRA YOU EXUDE... REMIND ME OF UCHIHA MADARA...
MADARA ...?

FOR SURE, IN REGARDS TO MADARA, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE...
...EVEN THAT HE'S STILL ALIVE...

THIS INTEL NEEDS TO BE REPORTED TO THE COUNCIL...
SAI!
A FORMER KONOHA SHINOBI AND UCHIHA CLAN LEADER WHO BATTLED AND LOST AGAINST THE FIRST HOKAGE AND THEN WAS NEVER SEEN AGAIN.

WHO IS THIS MADARA?

WHAT ELSE DID THE FOURTH HOKAGE ...
NARUTO!
...SAY TO YOU?

YES ...?
COULD YOU CONTACT THE HOKAGE FOR US?

OH... SURE...

KAKASHI ...
FATHERS TEND TO HAVE A LOT THEY WANT TO TELL THEIR SONS.

HUH ?

WUP
WUP

...

!!

ZI

NG

HE TOLD ME...

...HE BELIEVED IN ME!!

FSH
A RARE ACTUAL BATTLE... PERFECT TO EXERCISE THIS OUT-OF-PRACTICE BODY...

BAM

I KNOW.
LORD DANZO...

DON'T INTER-FERE...
I SHALL TAKE CARE OF THEM ALL.

Number 456: Naruto Heads Out...!!

BUFF-WHAMM

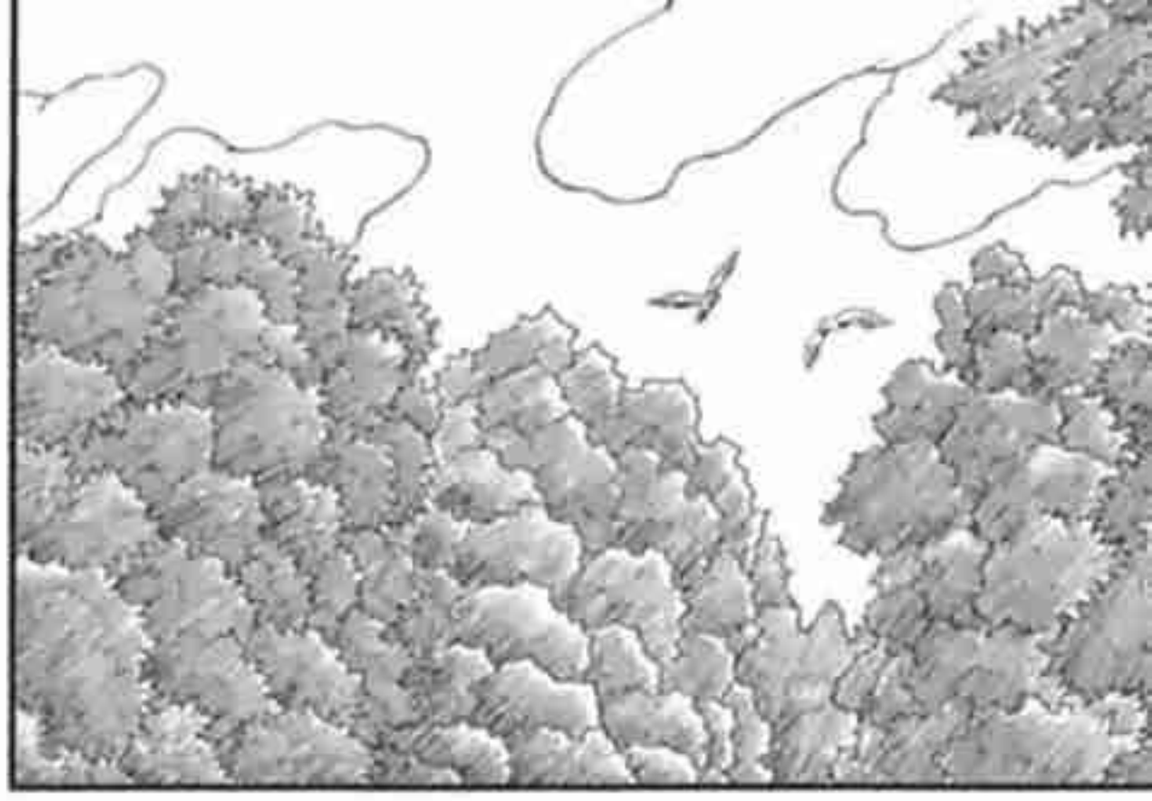
!!!

THK
THK
THK
THK

SEVEN, EIGHT, NINE, TEN... SEVEN-TEEN TOTAL, EH.

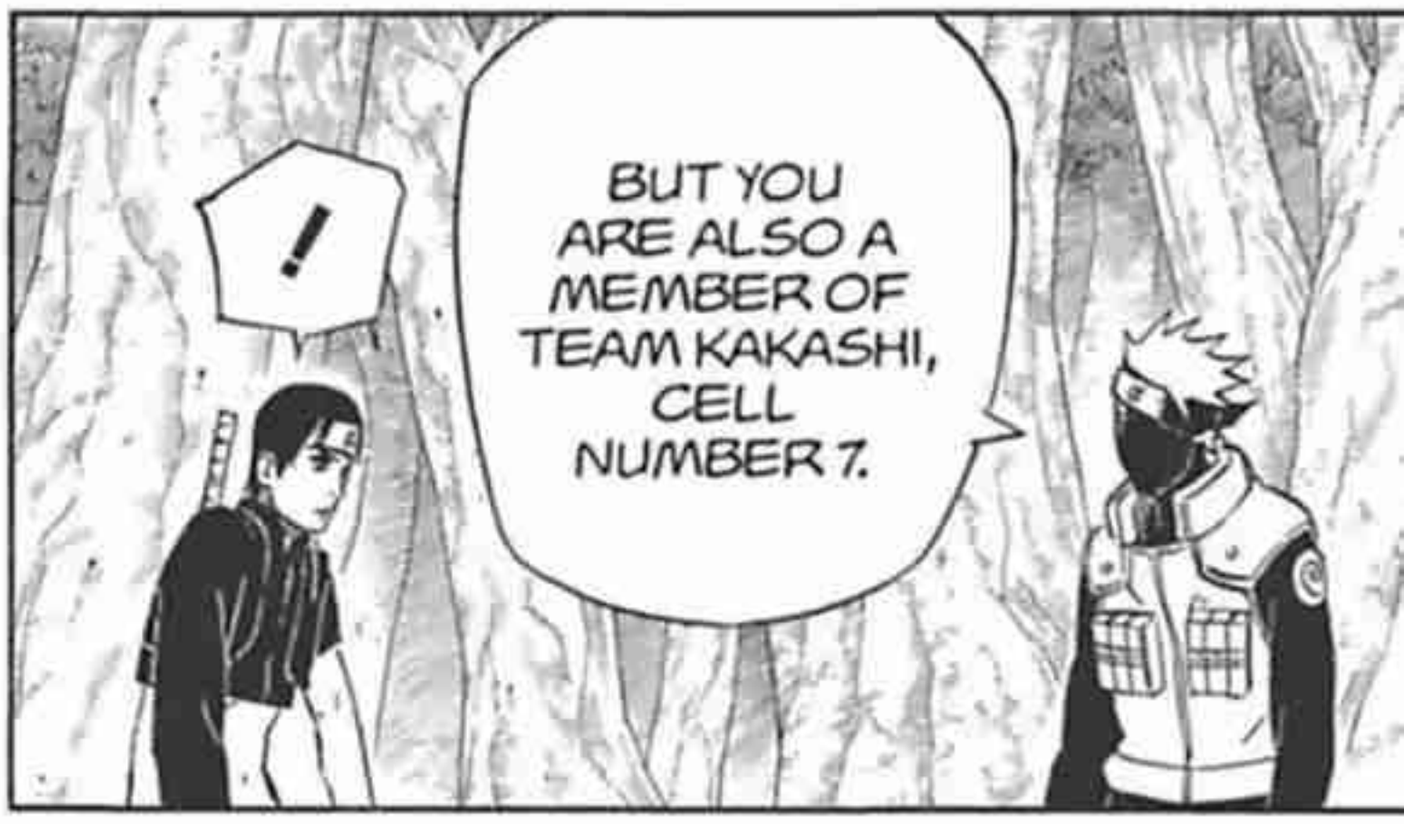
KLAK
ALL RIGHT! READY TO GO!!

FWAO



!
SAY NOTHING IS GOING ON.
I'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOU LEFT NARUTO'S PLANS OUT OF YOUR REPORT TO THE HOKAGE.

YOU ARE DANZO'S SUBORDINATE, ASSIGNED TO SPY ON NARUTO.
I... SO YOU STILL DON'T TRUST ME.


!
BUT YOU ARE ALSO A MEMBER OF TEAM KAKASHI, CELL NUMBER 7.

...SO I DO BELIEVE IN YOU.

WHAT'S THIS... I'M FEELING ...?

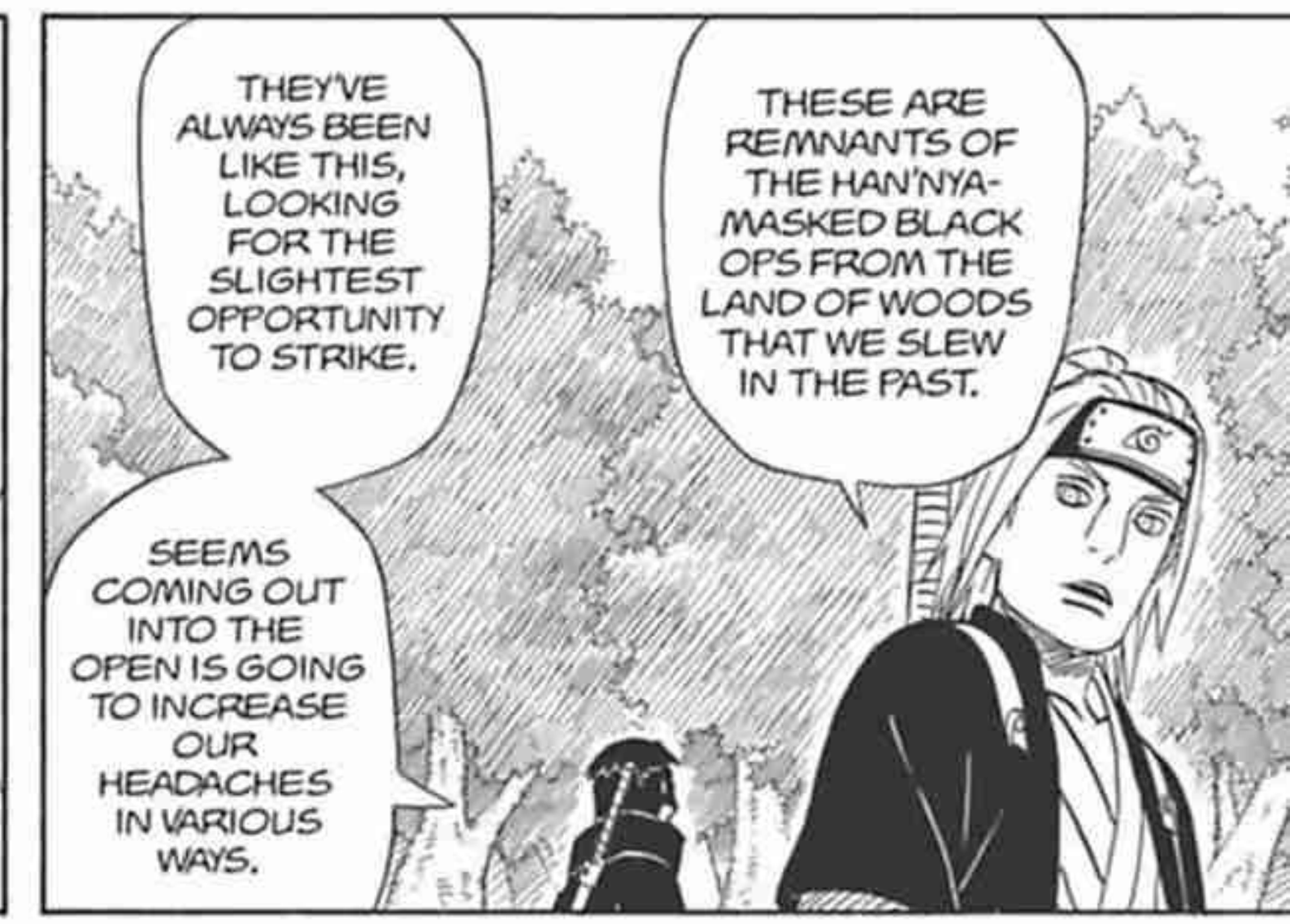
...HE BELIEVED IN ME!!
HE TOLD ME...

ZING...

TAK

CATCH YOU LATER!
DOINK

BUT BY EXCLUSIVELY CONTROLLING BOTH THE SURFACE AND THE UNDER-GROUND, ONE CAN TRULY STRENGTHEN VILLAGE AND NATION.
NINJA BELONGED TO A WORLD OF ASCETICS, ONCE. TO BE NAME-LESS WAS A SOURCE OF PRIDE.
SSH


THEY'VE ALWAYS BEEN LIKE THIS, LOOKING FOR THE SLIGHTEST OPPORTUNITY TO STRIKE.
THESE ARE REMNANTS OF THE HAN'NYA-MASKED BLACK OPS FROM THE LAND OF WOODS THAT WE SLEW IN THE PAST.
SEEMS COMING OUT INTO THE OPEN IS GOING TO INCREASE OUR HEADACHES IN VARIOUS WAYS.

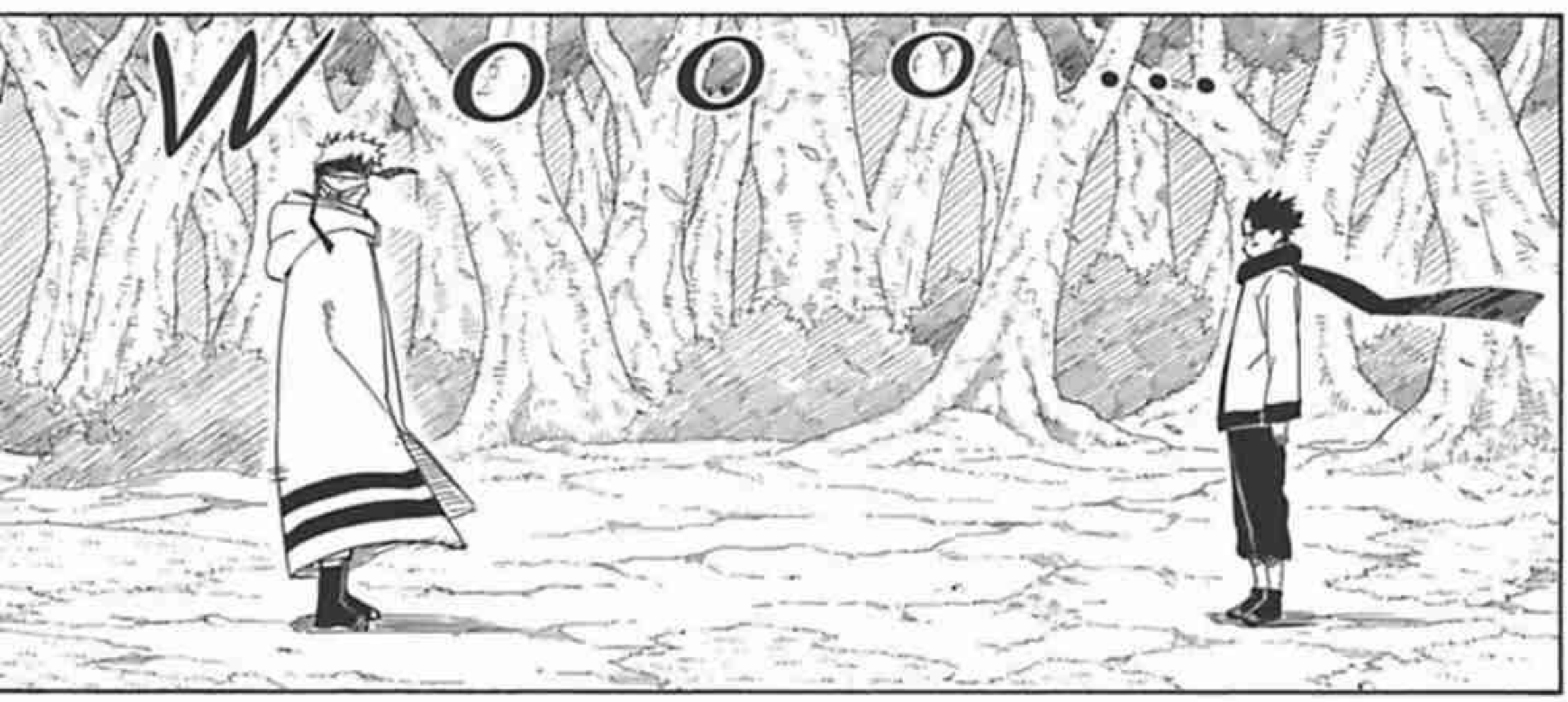
SHOOM SHOOM...

THEN EVEN THE JONIN COUNCIL WILL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO ACCEPT ME AS WELL.
I SHALL ENSURE THIS SUMMIT SUCCEEDS AND MAKE THE OTHER SHADOWS ACKNOWLEDGE ME AS HOKAGE.
MY ERA HAS FINALLY COME.

WOOO

?!

!!
HOLD ON! THERE'S SOME-THING AHEAD!


WOOO...

?!!

NINJA CENTERFOLD!!
FWP

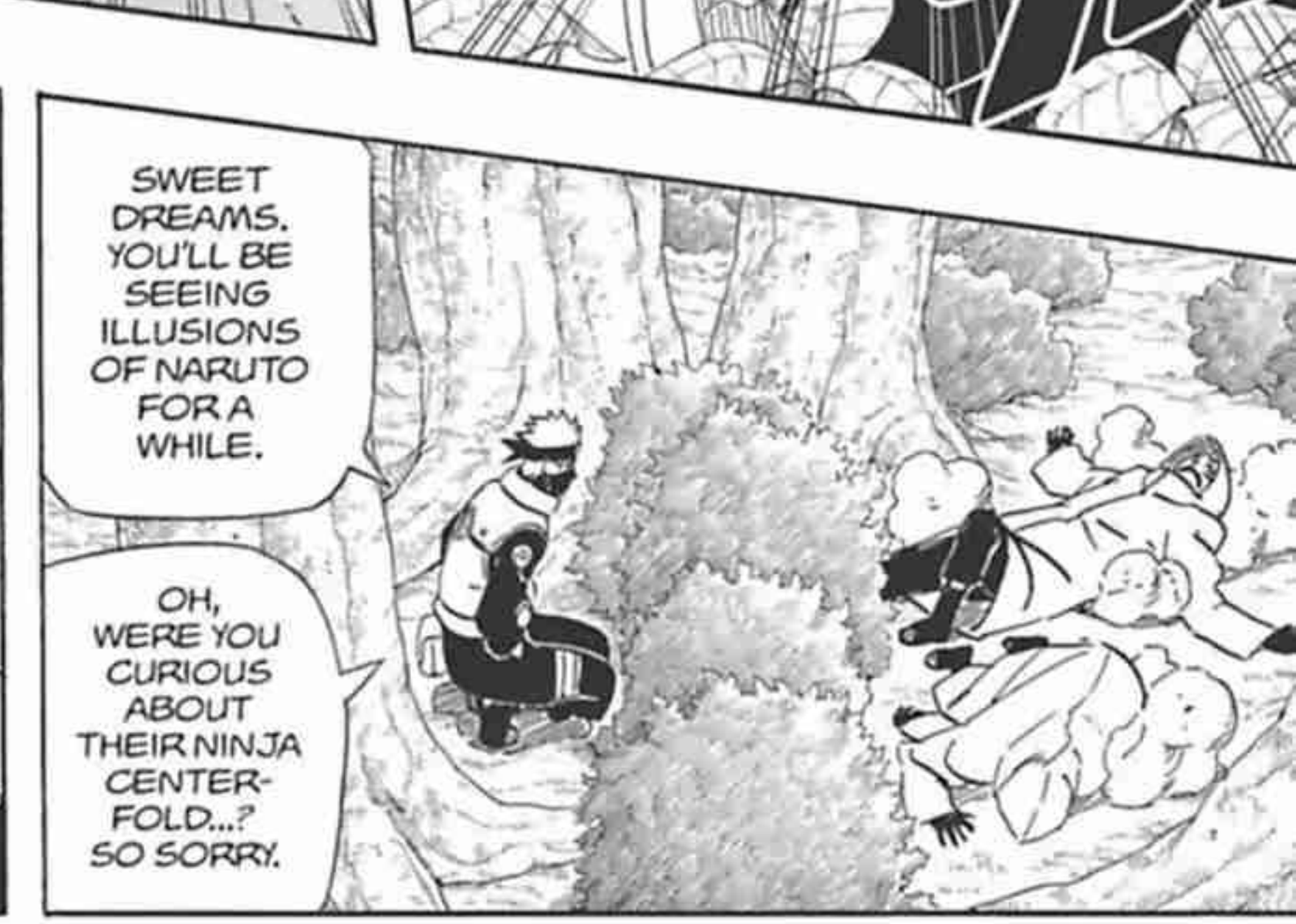
I DON'T KNOW. WHAT ARE THEY DOING?
HEY... WHAT'S GOING ON?!

THUP

WHRRR

THO

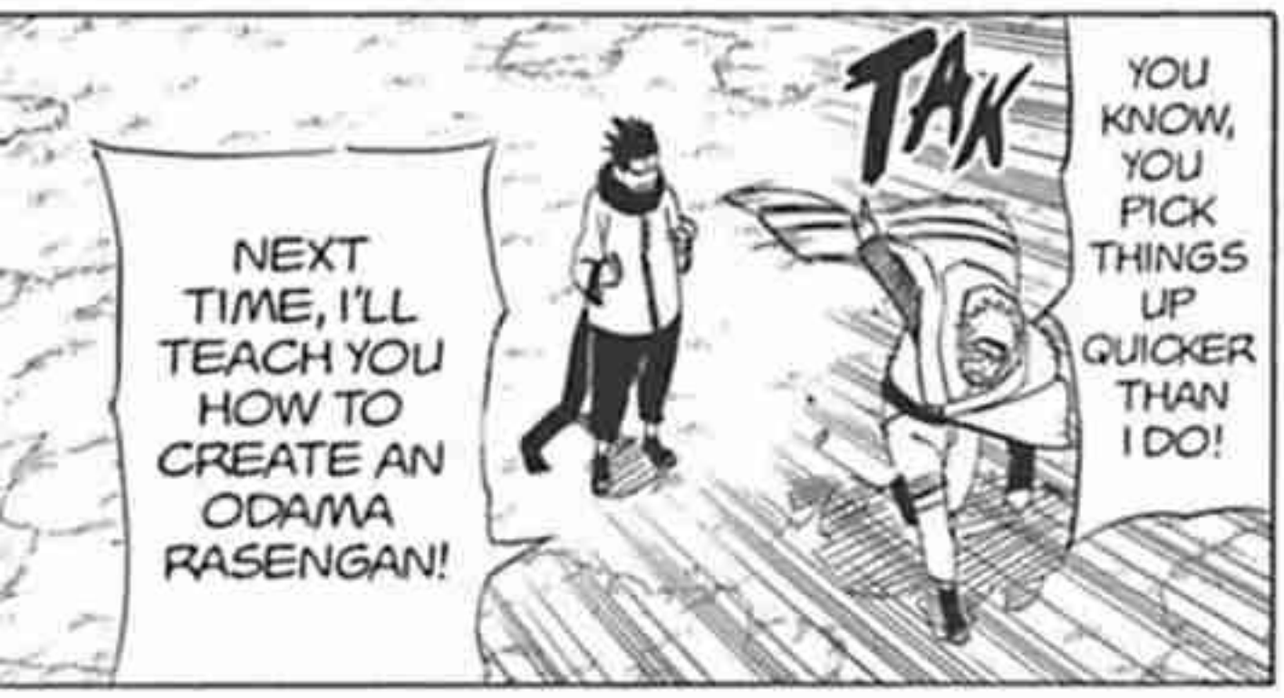
OW



YOU'RE ONE OF KONOHA'S HEROES TOO!
GOOD WORK, KONOHA-MARU!
FAP

...THAT YOU TOOK DOWN ONE OF THE PAINS WITH A RASENGAN!
?
HEY, I HEARD...

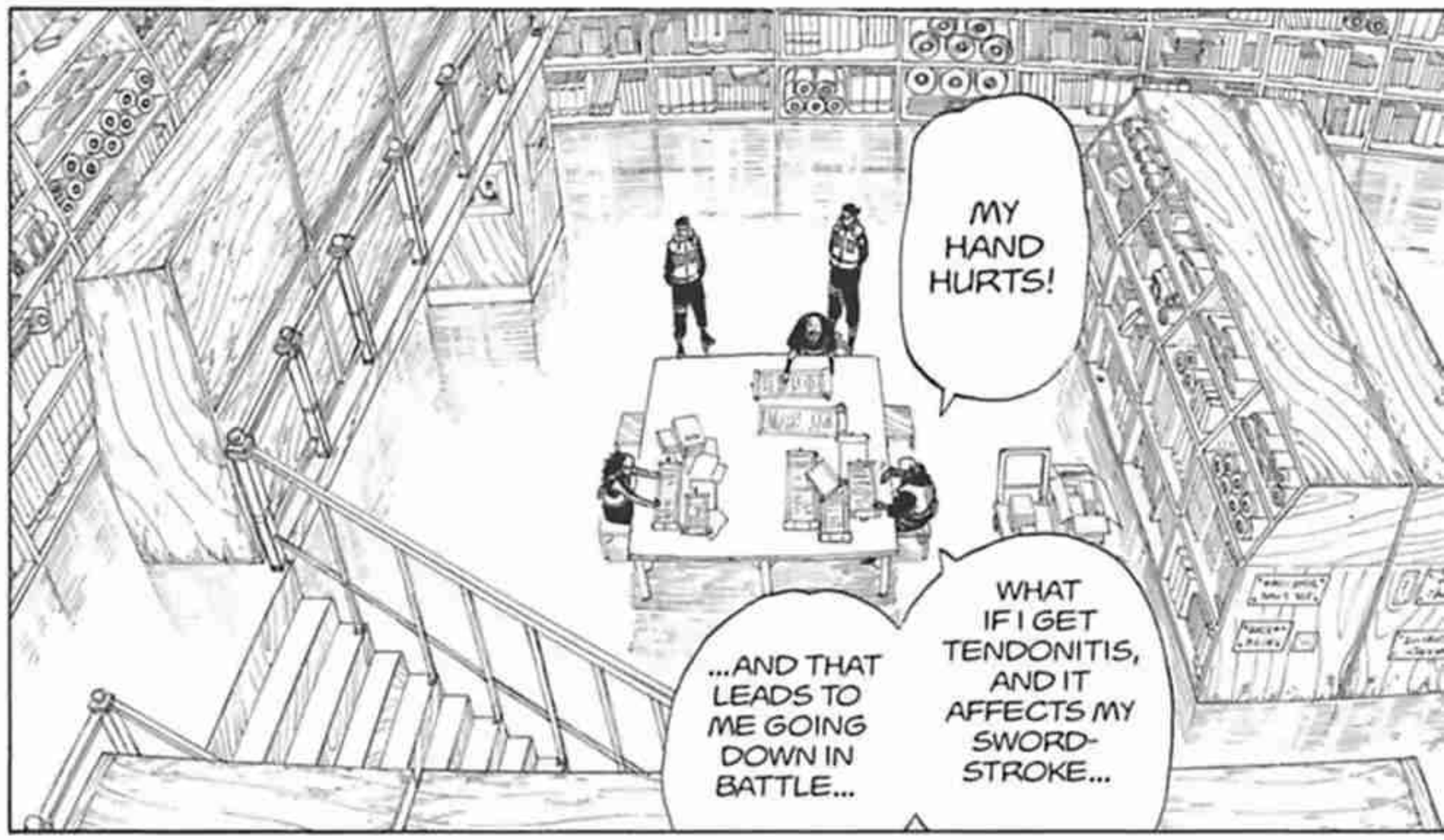
...


NEXT TIME, I'LL TEACH YOU HOW TO CREATE AN ODAMA RASENGAN!
TAK
YOU KNOW, YOU PICK THINGS UP QUICKER THAN I DO!

EH-HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH.
HEH... HEH HEH HEH.

...

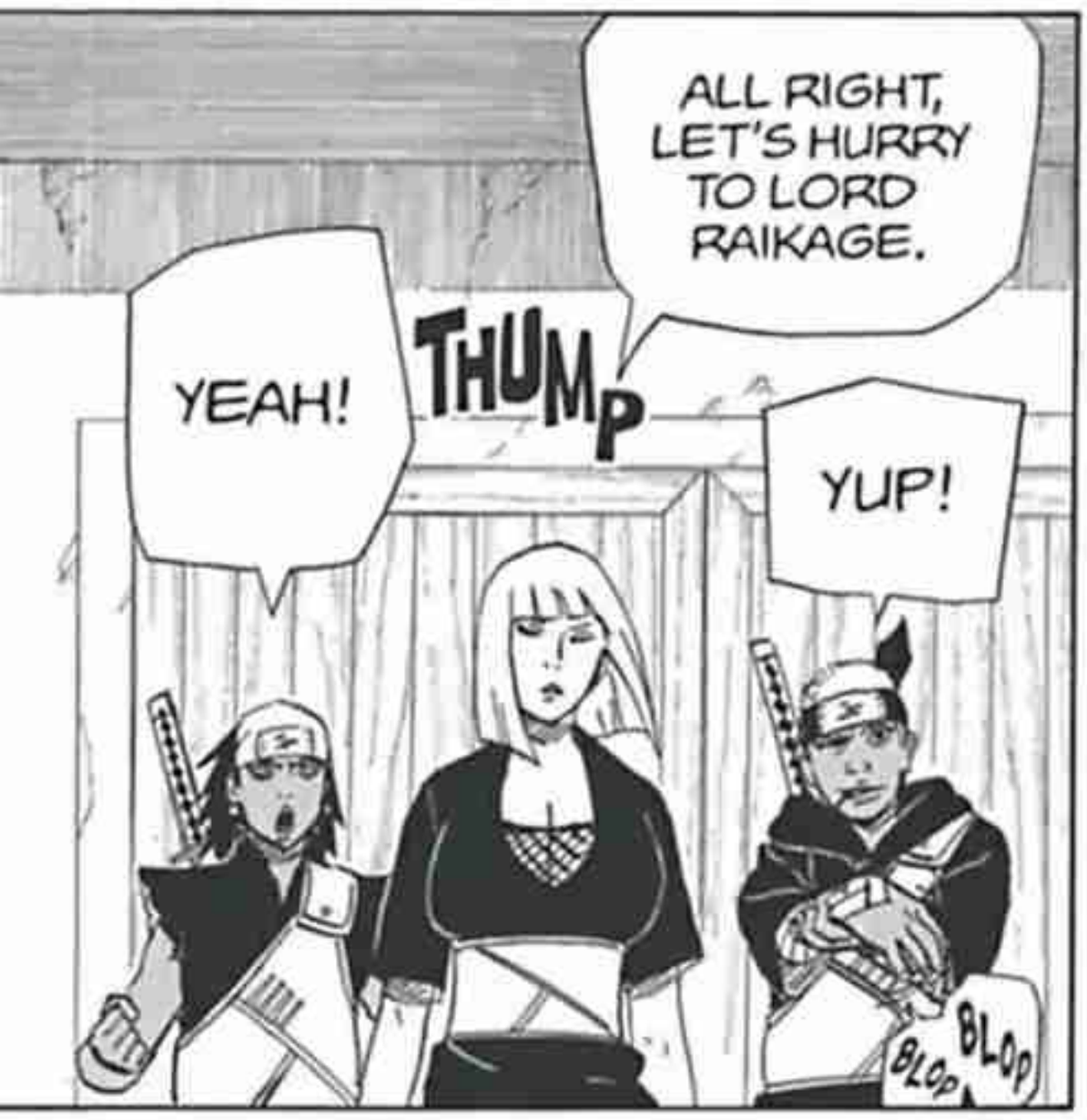
YEAH !!!
SHOU


MY HAND HURTS!
WHAT IF I GET TENDONITIS, AND IT AFFECTS MY SWORD-STROKE...
...AND THAT LEADS TO ME GOING DOWN IN BATTLE...

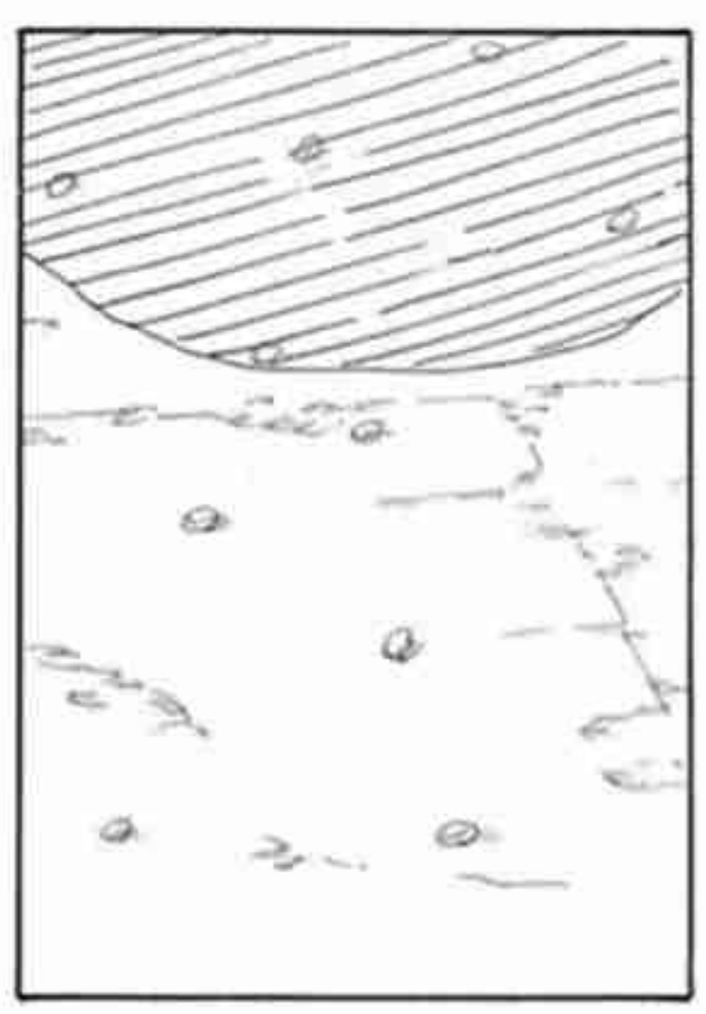
YEAH, FINALLY DONE!

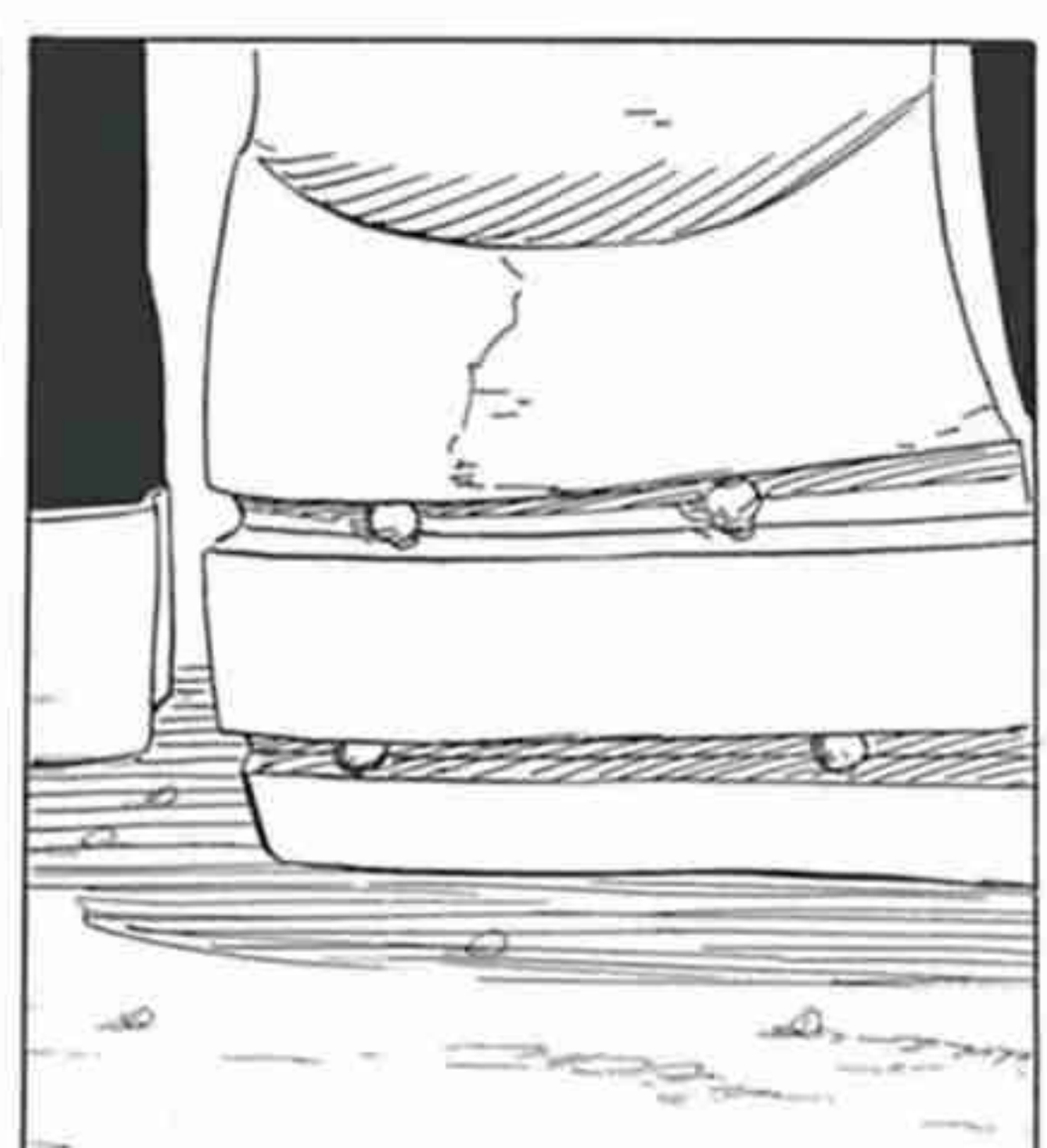
M-MUCH APOLO-GIES...
UM... COULD YOU PLEASE KEEP YOUR VOICES DOWN...?
FMP
KLIK

KEEP MOVING YOUR HAND, NOT YOUR TONGUE, BIG MOUTH!!!
...AND I DIE...



(KONOHA ARCHIVES)





NOW, TIME TO CONTACT KAKASHI AND NARUTO.
ZWOOO...

DESPITE MY LOOKS, I'M PRETTY GOOD AT TAILING.
SORRY, BUT I'M PLANTING SIGNAL SEEDS ON YOU.

ZIT
I WONDER IF HE'S ALL RIGHT?

SHA

...

WHAM
OW!

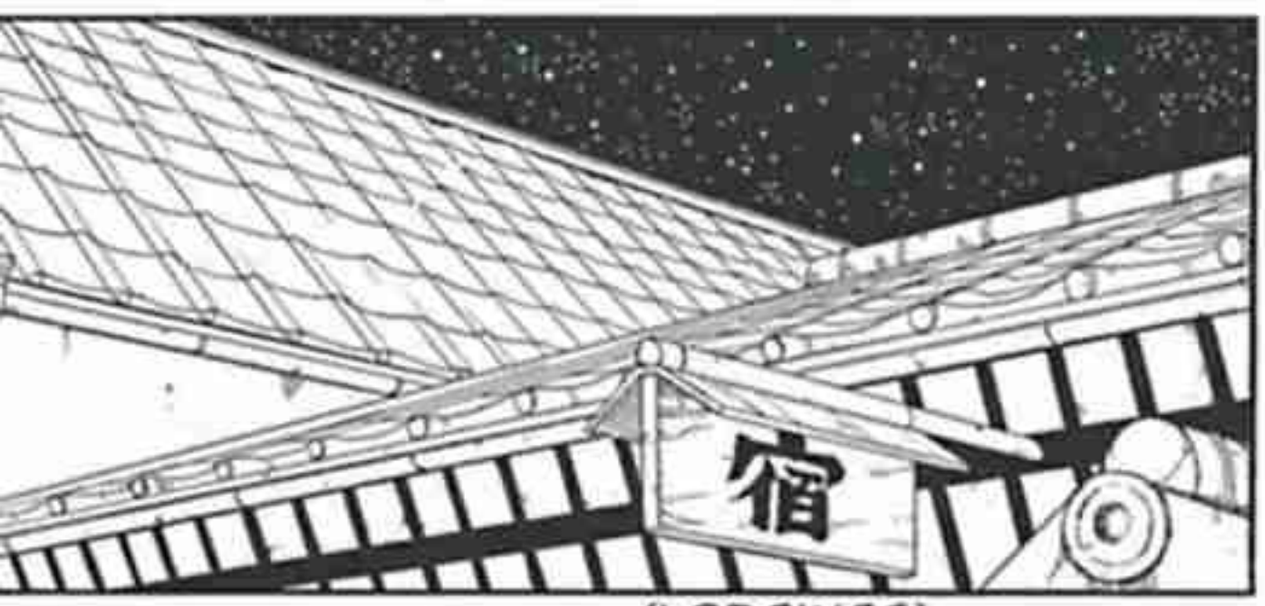
IF YOU SAY ANOTHER WORD, I'LL PUMMEL YOU TOO, OMOI!
HUH? SO YOU ARE WORRIED!

YEAH !!

STRETCH

FSH

SHADOW THEM.



(LODGINGS)

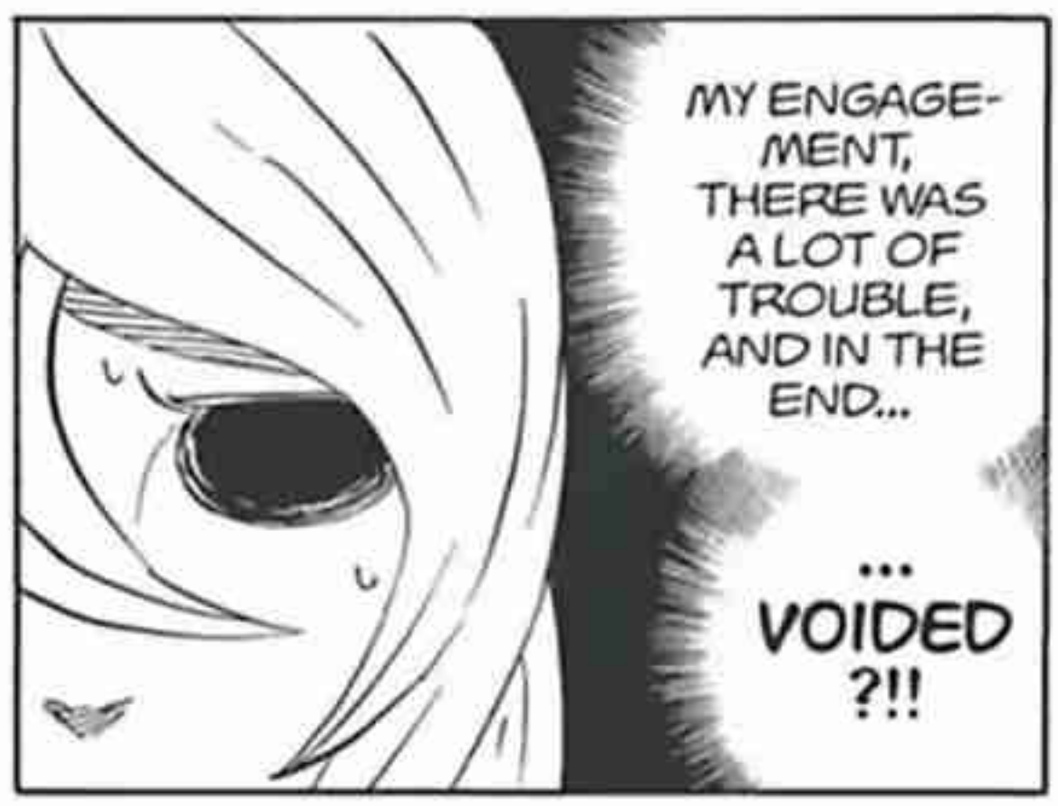
THE NIGHTMARE CREATED BY THE FOURTH MIZUKAGE HAS BEEN OVER FOR QUITE A WHILE...
AO... WE NO LONGER LIVE IN THAT ERA OF DARKNESS WHEN WE WERE KNOWN AS THE VILLAGE OF BLOODY MIST.
YOU WOULD DO WELL NOT TO BRING UP THE PAST.

HE SPIKES A TEMPERATURE FROM SUCH A SHORT JAUNT?! THOSE OF OUR GENERATION...
THIS IS WHY YOUTH THESE DAYS GET SO FULL OF THEMSELVES!
LADY FIFTH, YOU SPOIL CHOJURO TOO MUCH!

EN-GAGED TO BE MAR-RIED?!
...EN-GAGED ...

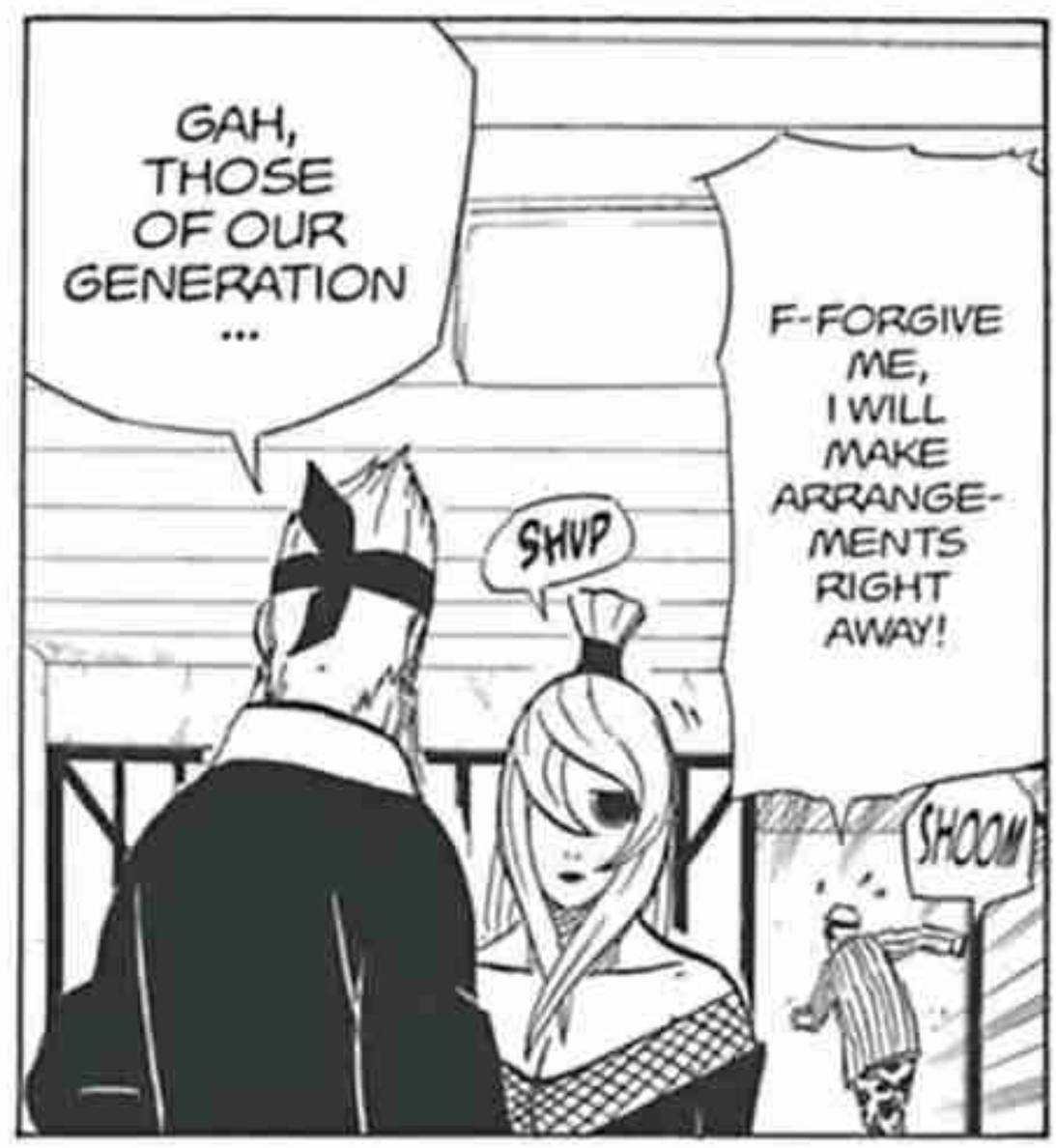
WHAT HAVE YOU ENGAGED FOR US TO EAT TONIGHT? YOU HAVE ARRANGED FOR OUR MEALS, CHOJURO, HAVEN'T YOU?
OH...
?

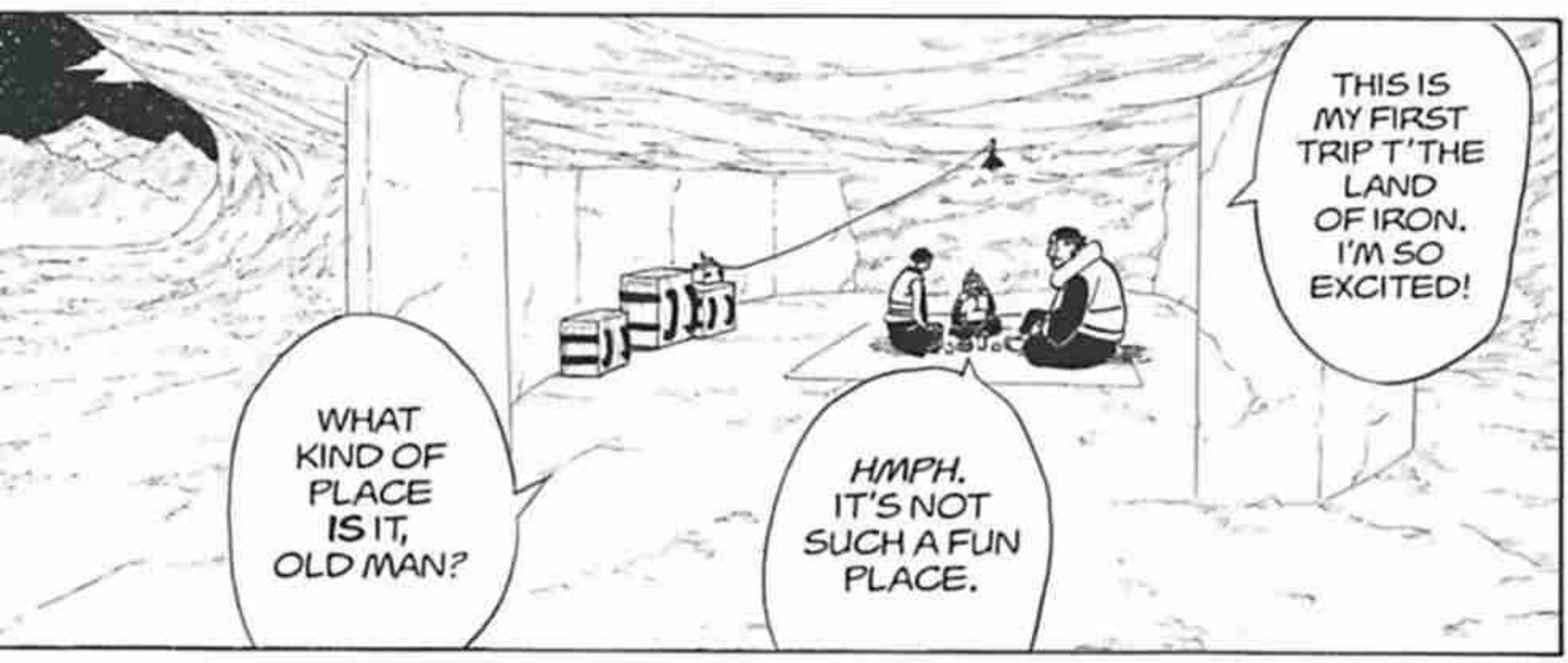
NOW, LET US STOP SUCH DEPRESSING TALK AND HAVE SOME SUPPER INSTEAD.
F-FORGIVE ME... I JUST...
I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO INN MEALS.


MY ENGAGEMENT, THERE WAS A LOT OF TROUBLE, AND IN THE END...
... VOIDED ?!!

GAH, YOU VACILLATING FOOL!! THIS IS WHY YOUTH THESE DAYS HAVE A VOID IN THEIR HEARTS WHERE AMBITION SHOULD LIVE!
TH-THERE WERE SO MANY CHOICES, I HAD A LOT OF TROUBLE DECIDING...
...AND IN THE END, I WASN'T ABLE TO MAKE UP MY MIND...

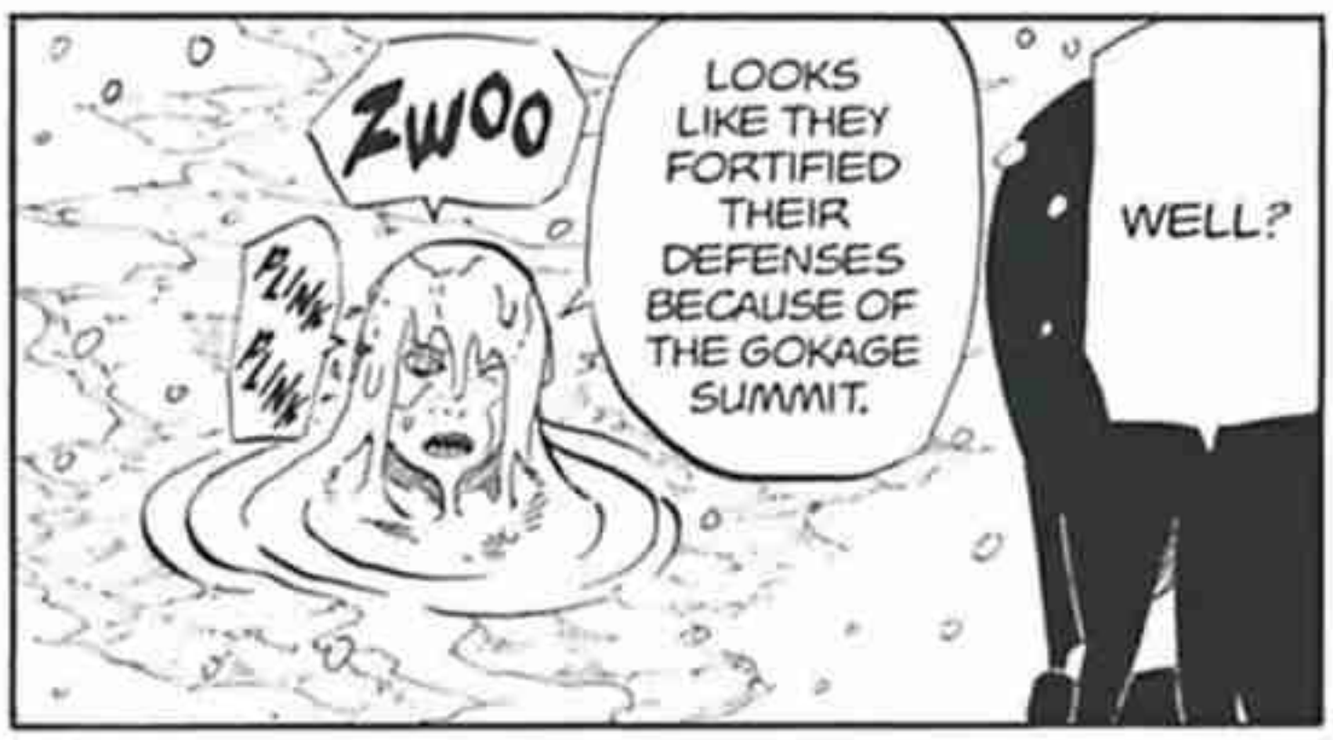
WHAAAT ?!!
SHUT UP, OR I WILL KILL YOU.


GAH, THOSE OF OUR GENERATION ...
SHUP
F-FORGIVE ME, I WILL MAKE ARRANGE-MENTS RIGHT AWAY!
SHOOM


THIS IS MY FIRST TRIP T'THE LAND OF IRON. I'M SO EXCITED!
WHAT KIND OF PLACE IS IT, OLD MAN?
HMPH. IT'S NOT SUCH A FUN PLACE.

AND THE LAND OF IRON DOES NOT HAVE SHINOBI...
THERE HAS BEEN A LONG-STANDING AGREEMENT THAT SHINOBI SHALL NOT ENGAGE AGAINST THEM.
THEY'RE A NEUTRAL STATE POSSESSING POWERFUL BATTLE STRENGTH, WITH A UNIQUE CULTURE AND THEIR OWN LAWS.
IT'S FORMED FROM THREE MOUNTAINS KNOWN AS THE THREE WOLVES.

...IT IS DEFENDED BY SAMURAI.



READ THIS WAY
I AM A GENERAL OF THIS LAND OF IRON.
MY NAME IS MIFUNÉ.
WE HAVE BEEN AWAITING YOUR ARRIVAL, LORD KAZEKAGE.
WE CAN SERVE YOU SOME HOT TEA... PLEASE, THIS WAY.
BRR, IT SURE IS COLD HERE... THIS WEATHER'S THE POLAR OPPOSITE OF THE LAND OF WIND.
IT IS A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU.
I AM THE KAZEKAGE, GAARA.
WE'RE ON A STEALTH MISSION, REMEMBER! SHH!!
SHH...!
BRR... IT JUST GOT REALLY COLD!!
ACHOO!!

Number 457: The Gokage Summit Commences...!!

CELEBRATING ITS 10TH YEAR!
THE FIVE KAGES ARE GATHERED!
THE HIGHEST SHINOBI AUTHORITY IN THE LAND...
NARUTO
-ナルト-
BY JAPFLAP
1/2
457 : THE KAGE SUMMIT COMMENCES!
岸本斉史

NARUTO

WELL?
WHAP
WHAP
SKREE
SKREE

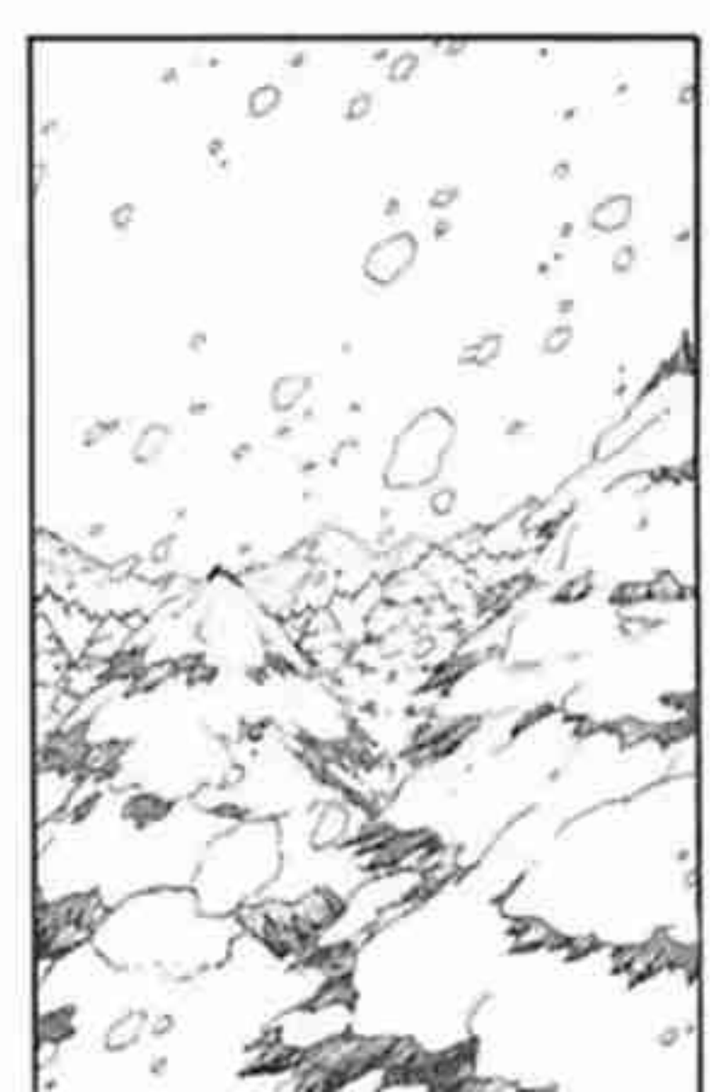
WHOOO...

KARIN, KEEP AN EYE ON THE CHAKRA POSITIONS OF THE LOOKOUTS AT ALL TIMES. WE'RE GOING IN.
THERE'S A ROUTE THAT CLIMBS UP FROM THE WEST. NOT TOO MANY LOOKOUTS.

YOU'RE COMING TOO.
CONFIRM WHICH OF THEM IS DANZO.

YEAH?
ME TOO?!
ZETSU, RIGHT?
TIME TO LET YOUR SKILLS SHINE.

!

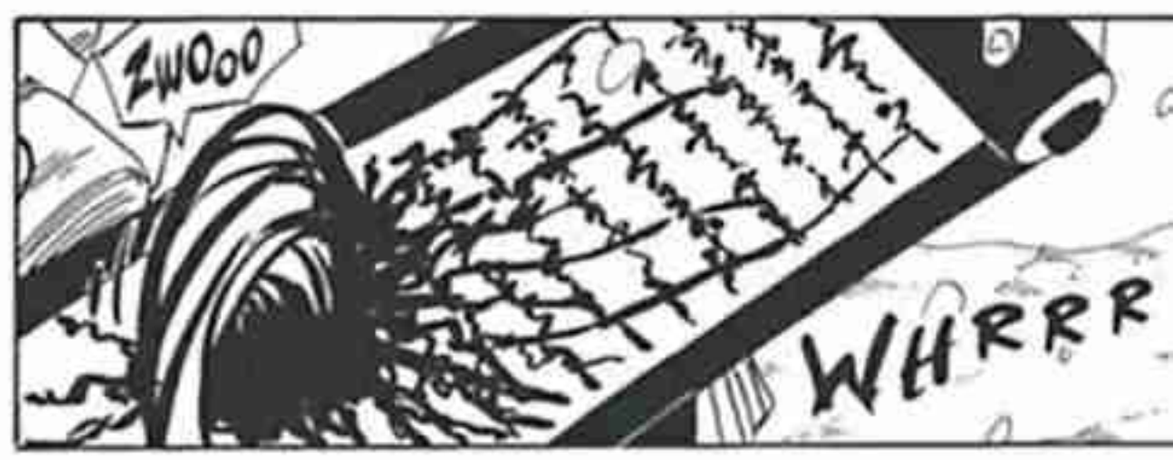


WHAP

A MESSAGE FROM SAI, IT SEEMS.
WHAP
WHAP

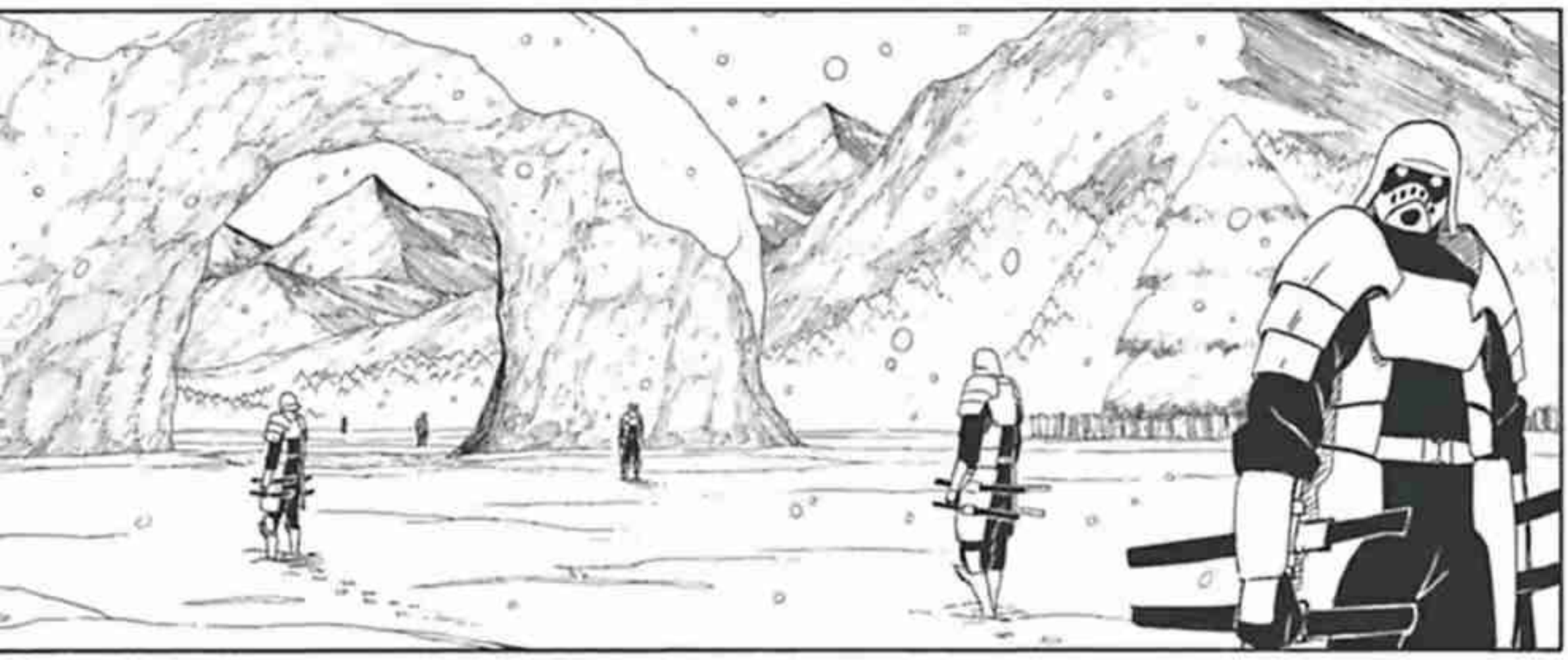
ZWOP

LET'S GO.
JUST A ROUTINE REPORT.
FLUMP


ZWOOO
WHRRR

...

WHAT IS IT?



AND WHAT IF THE OTHER SHADOWS CAME TOO?!
THEY'D SEND SAMURAI REINFORCE-MENTS...
YOU STUPID?! IF THE HOKAGE'S ARRIVAL IS DELAYED, THEY'LL KNOW SOMETHING HAPPENED!
CAN'T WE JUST AMBUSH AND OFF HIM NOW?
I'M POOPED ALREADY ...

WHAT'S MORE IMPORTANT IS TO IDENTIFY DANZO'S FACE BEFORE THE SUMMIT STARTS.
SEEMS LIKE YOU HAVE YOUR HANDS FULL TOO, SASUKE.
DON'T LIE.

JUST FOCUS ON THE ENEMIES' CHAKRA POSITIONS, KARIN.
SHUT UP!
HA, HA... BUSTED.

RIGHT, SASUKE ?!
WHEN WE HAVE NO IDEA OF THE ENEMY'S ABILITIES, IT'S BEST TO BIDE OUR TIME AND ATTACK HIM ON HIS WAY HOME.

WHY WOULD I LIE? DANZO IS NO FRIEND OF OURS...

I CAN SENSE CHAKRA.
AND WHEN ONE LIES, ONE'S CHAKRA BECOMES MUDDIED ...
I'LL BE KEEPING AN EYE ON YOUR CHAKRA TOO, YOU HEAR?

SHOOM
SHOOM

LET'S DESCEND !!
TAK
AH!

LORD RAIKAGE, IT'S SQUAD SAMUI.
WHIP
!

WE HAVE RETURNED FROM KONOHA-GAKURE.

FMP

AND?!

FMP FMP

SHOW YOUR-SELVES, KONOHA DOGS!!

?!

SAMUI... YOU'VE BEEN TAILED.

FMP FMP

W O O

NARUTO, HOW DARE YOU!!

PRETTY IMPRESSIVE TO TAIL SAMUI, I'LL GIVE YOU THAT.

Y-YOU ...

READ THIS WAY
...I WANT YOU TO CANCEL HIS DISPOSAL ...
SASUKE ... UCHIHA SASUKE ...
GULP
WHAT ARE YOU...
YOU SURE GOT GUTS ...
YOU'RE STILL TALKING ABOUT THAT?
...
H-HEY, THIS ISN'T REALLY THE PLACE...
I DON'T WANT EITHER MY COMRADES OR YOURS TO SEEK VENGEANCE!
PLUS, I DON'T WANT SASUKE'S DEATH TO BECOME THE CAUSE OF WAR BETWEEN KONOHA AND CLOUD!!
BUT THIS IS THE ONLY WAY I KNOW HOW TO SAY IT!
I KNOW IT SOUNDS SUPER-CRAZY...!
SASUKE'S MY FRIEND ...!
I CAN'T JUST STAND AROUND AND WATCH MY FRIEND GET KILLED!
LET'S GO.
SHUP

SASUKE'S ALWAYS BEEN ALL ABOUT VENGEANCE !!

SHUP

I DON'T WANT ANY MORE VENGEANCE-BASED WAR!!!

PLEASE !!

I DON'T WANT KONOHA AND CLOUD TO KILL EACH OTHER!!

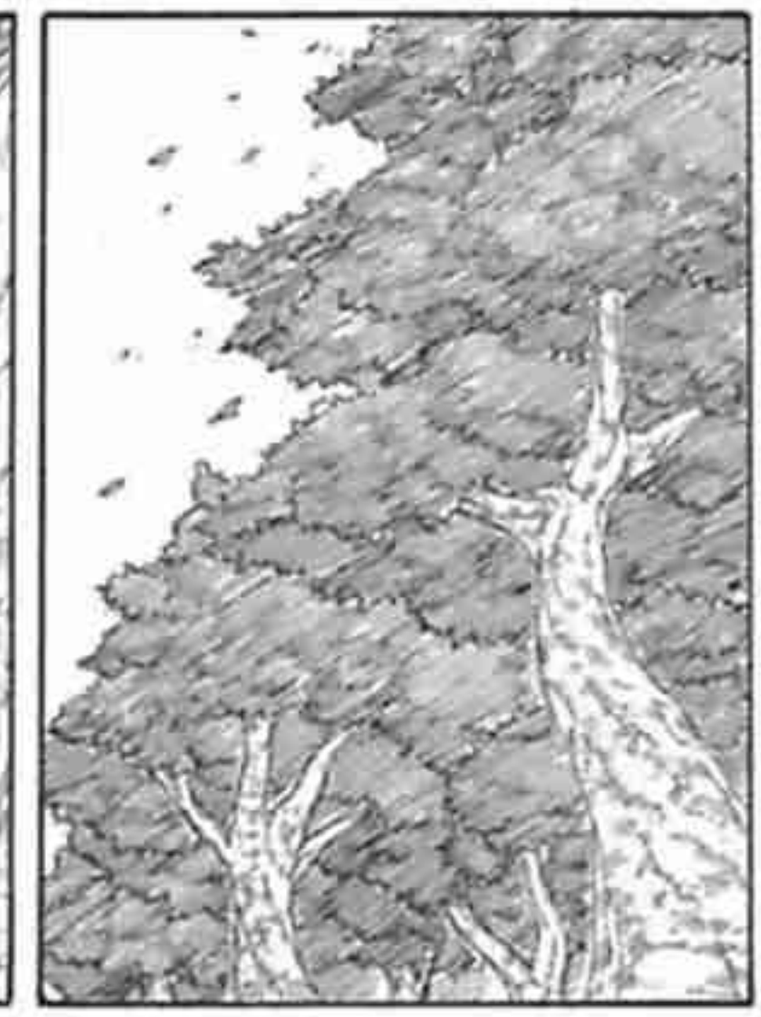
I DON'T WANT ANYONE ELSE TO BECOME LIKE SASUKE!!

HIS VEN-GEANCE BECAME WARPED!

HE'S OBSESSED WITH IT. IT CHANGED HIM!!

AND HE STOPPED BEING THE GUY I KNEW!

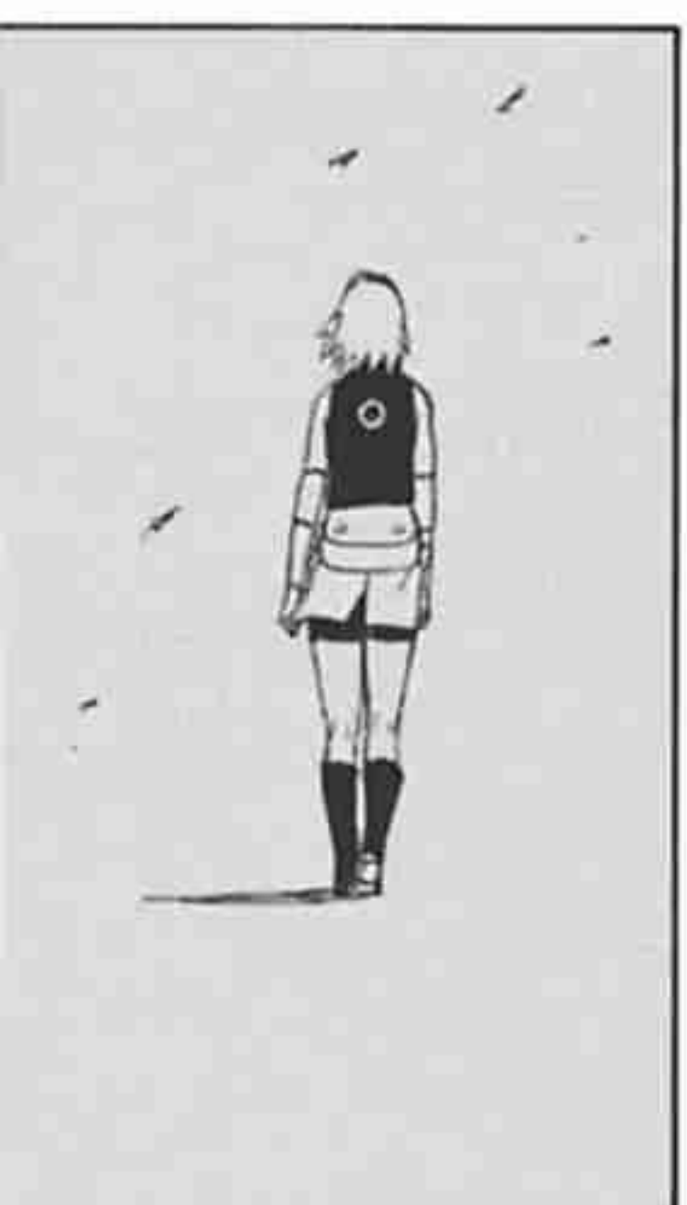
PLEASE TAKE CARE OF THE MISSION..... REPORT TO MASTER KAKASHI FOR ME, OKAY?
WELL THEN, I'VE GOT SOME ERRANDS TO RUN, SO...



YOU LIKE SAKURA, DON'T YOU?
HMM ...?
HEY, NARUTO ...

...

YEAH! SURE, NO PROBLEM!



...
?

I SAW IT IN A BOOK... THAT ONE TENDS TO SMILE ALL THE TIME IN FRONT OF SOME-ONE HE OR SHE LOVES.
YOU'RE LIKE THAT AROUND SAKURA.
HAVE YOU TOLD HER?
WHA-!
BOOM

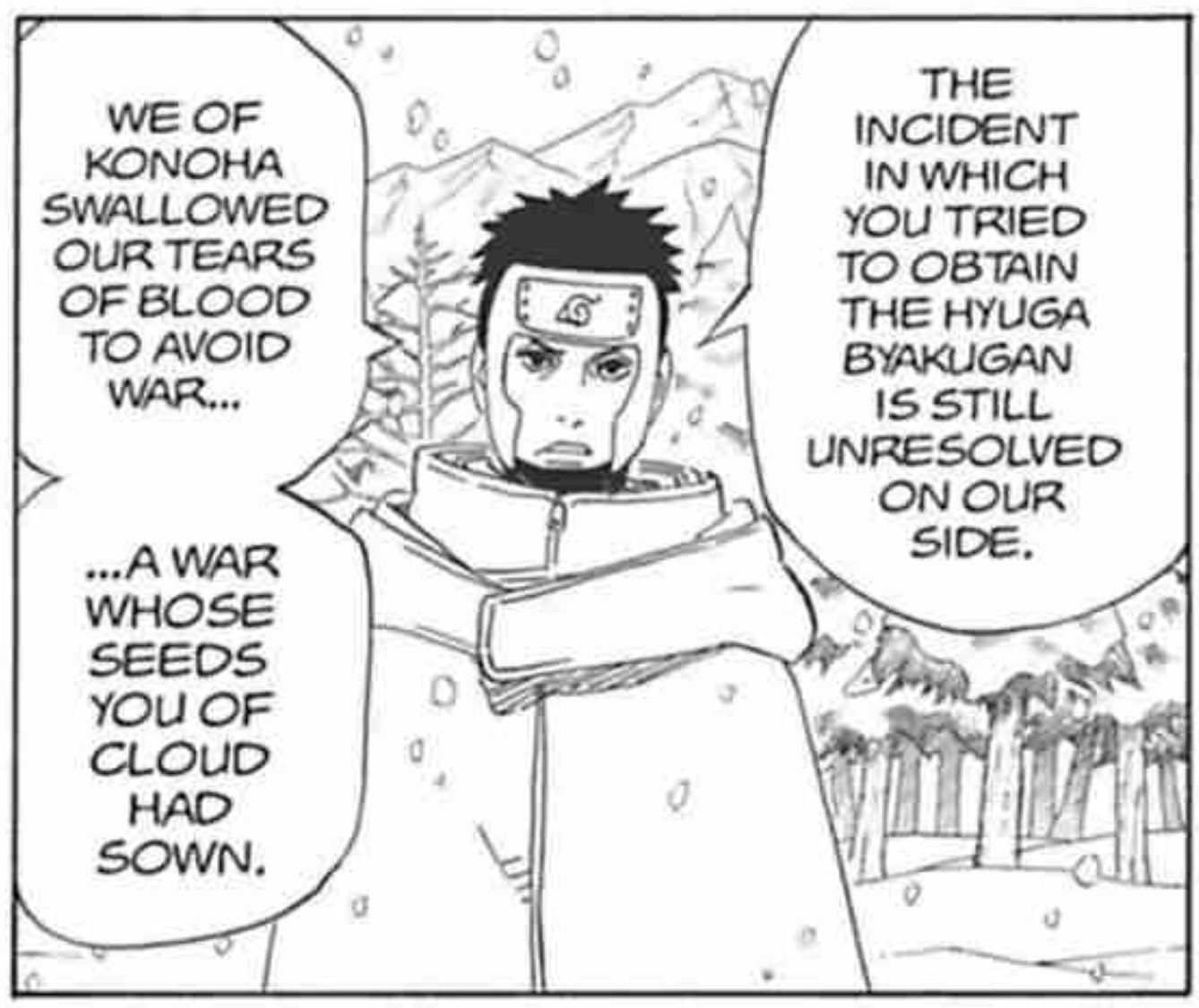
HOW CAN I?

I CAN'T EVEN KEEP MY PROMISES ...

...

WE'RE IN A RUSH. SORRY, BUT YOUR TIME IS UP.
FEH, YOU FOOL!!

...THAT YOUR EXISTENCE RIDES UPON THOSE NOBLE SACRIFICES.
DO NOT FORGET ...


WE OF KONOHA SWALLOWED OUR TEARS OF BLOOD TO AVOID WAR...
...A WAR WHOSE SEEDS YOU OF CLOUD HAD SOWN.
THE INCIDENT IN WHICH YOU TRIED TO OBTAIN THE HYUGA BYAKUGAN IS STILL UNRESOLVED ON OUR SIDE.

...
UNH ...

...AS ONE OF THE GOKAGE, WHAT THINK YOU OF THIS?
LORD RAIKAGE ...

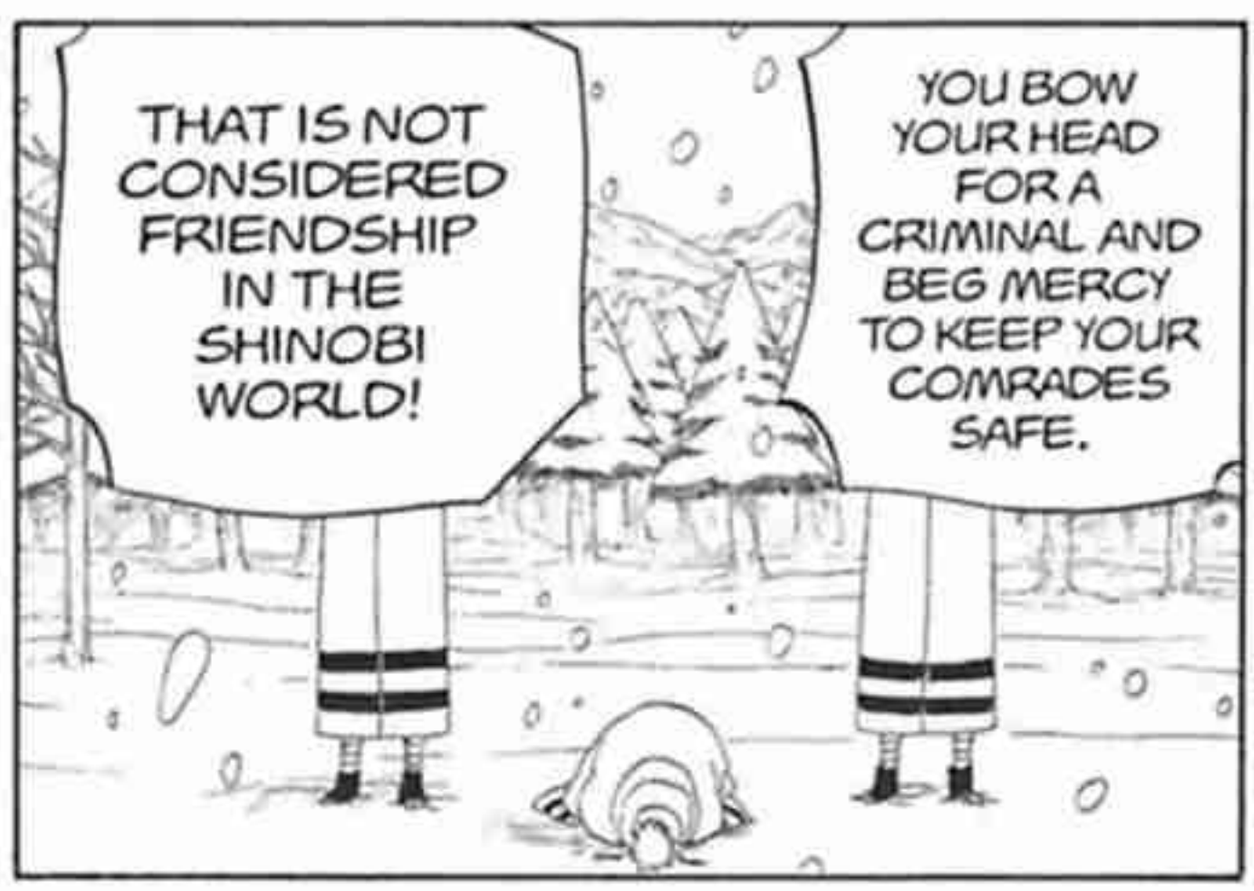
RIGHT HERE AND NOW, THIS YOUNG SHINOBI...
...NO MATTER HOW AWKWARDLY, IS BOWING HIS HEAD... IN HIS AFFECTION FOR CLOUD AND LEAF, VILLAGE AND NATION.

IN NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN SHINOBI, CONCESSIONARY BEHAVIORS ARE TABOO.

SHINOBI OUGHT NOT LOWER THEIR HEADS SO EASILY!
ACTION AND POWER ARE WHAT SHINOBI RESPECT!

THOSE WHO ARE WEAK ARE TRAMPLED!
...EVERY NATION... EVERY VILLAGE HAS BEEN ATTEMPTING TO OBTAIN EVER MORE POWERFUL NINJUTSU.
THAT IS THE ABSOLUTE TRUISM OF THE SHINOBI WORLD!

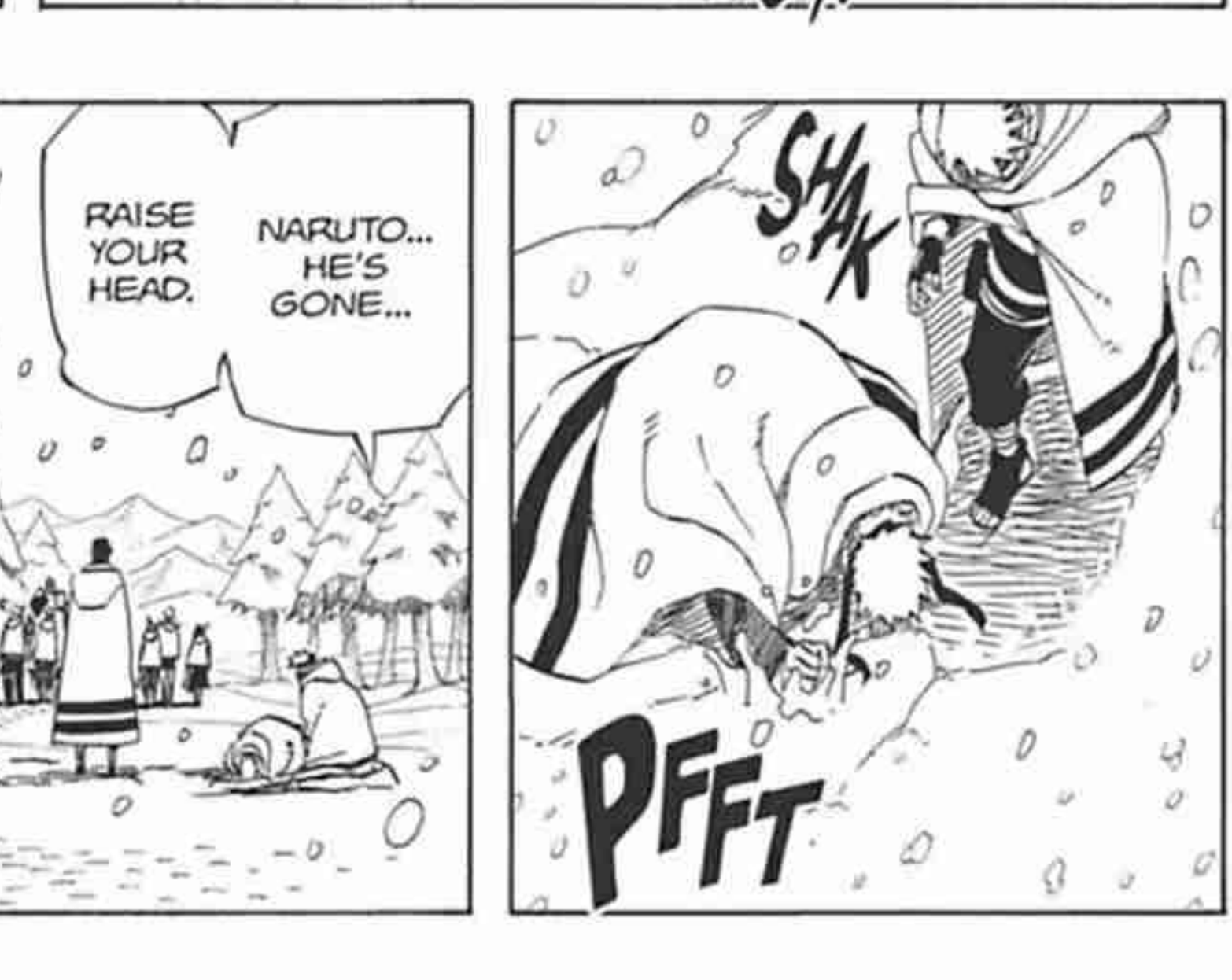
THE HISTORY OF MANKIND IS A HISTORY OF WAR!
SINCE THE THREE GREAT NINJA WARS...


THAT IS NOT CONSIDERED FRIENDSHIP IN THE SHINOBI WORLD!
YOU BOW YOUR HEAD FOR A CRIMINAL AND BEG MERCY TO KEEP YOUR COMRADES SAFE.

THE AKATSUKI SHALL BE NAMED INTERNATIONALLY SOUGHT CRIMINALS.
ONCE THAT HAPPENS, NOT JUST I, BUT THE ENTIRE WORLD WILL GO AFTER SASUKE.

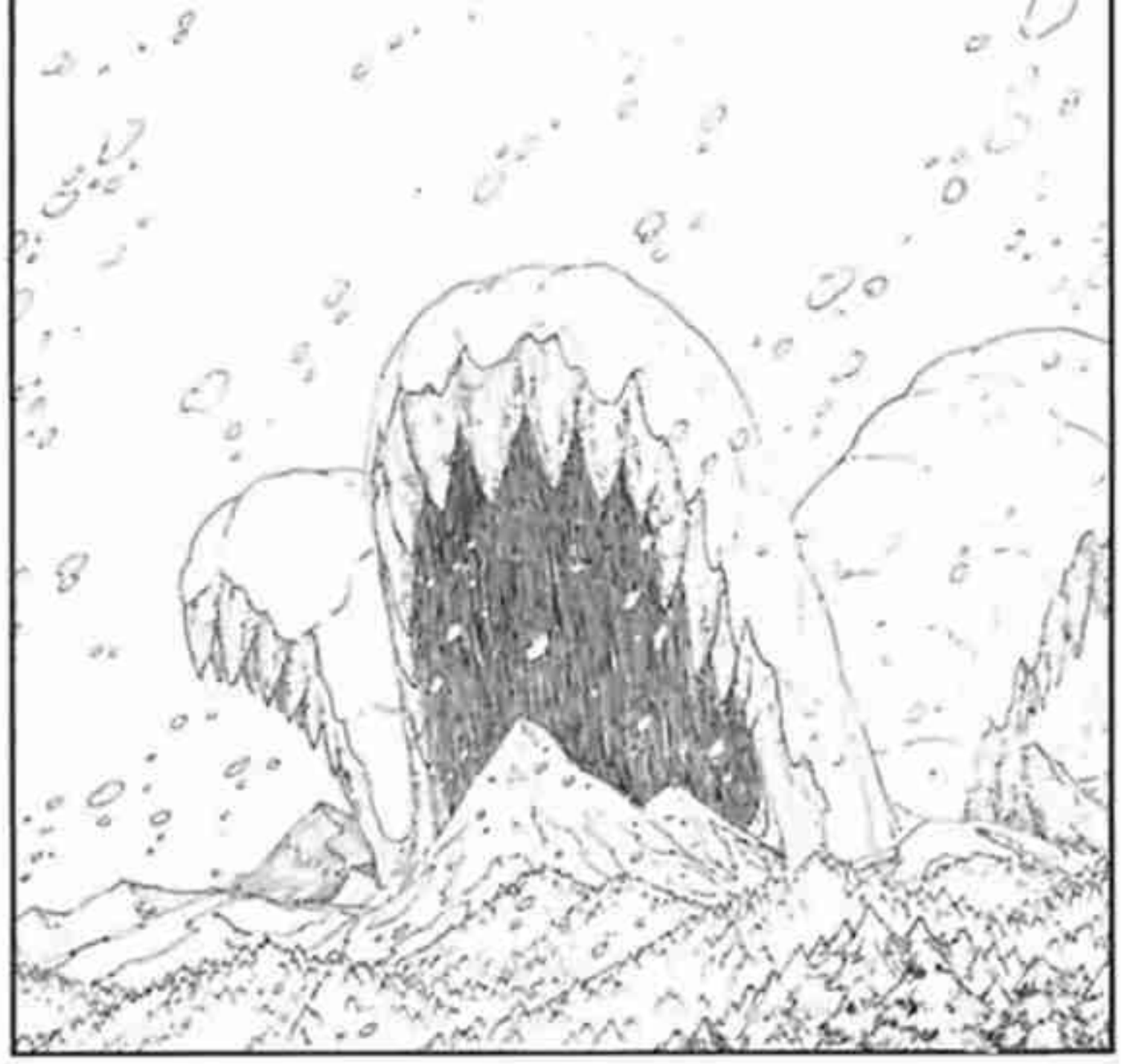
...
HA!

THE SHINOBI WORLD IS NOT SO INDULGENT AS TO SUFFER FOOLS!!
KONOHA BRAT... THINK MORE DEEPLY WHAT IT IS YOU OUGHT TO DO!
SHK
SHK
SHK

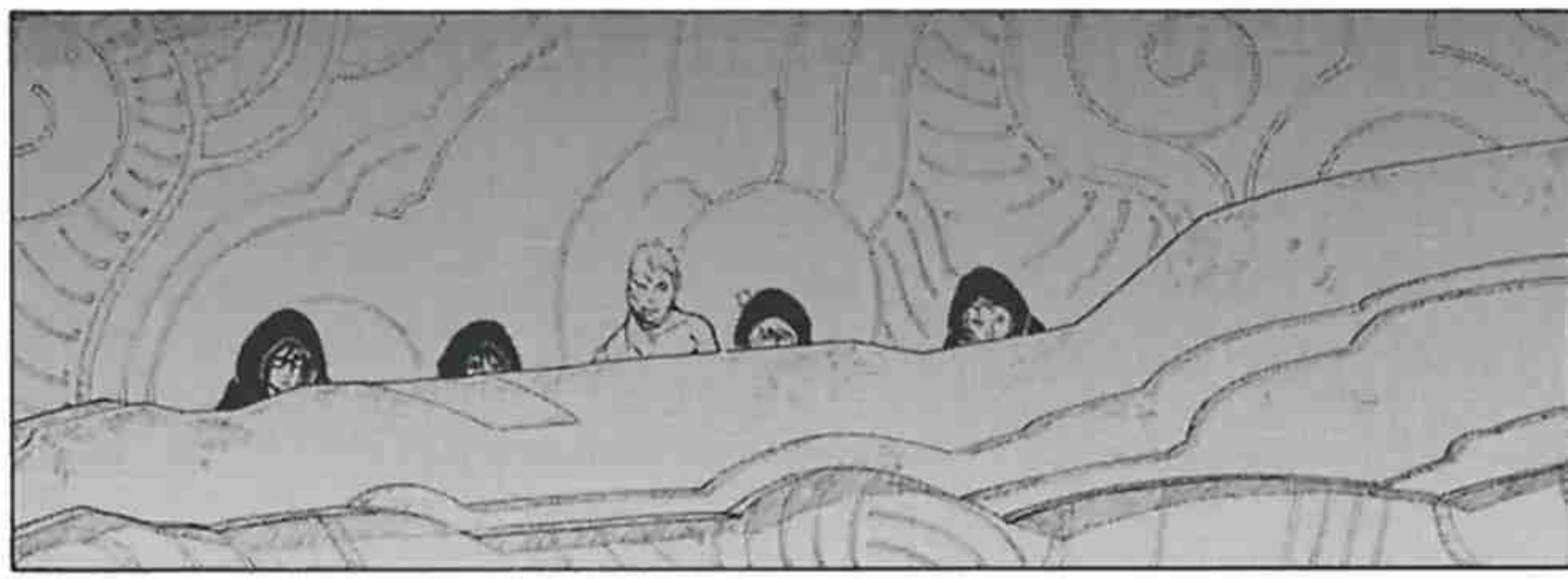

RAISE YOUR HEAD.
NARUTO... HE'S GONE...
SHAK
PFFT

SAI...?
SSH...

EXCUSE ME.



SAKURA... I NEED TO SPEAK WITH YOU.

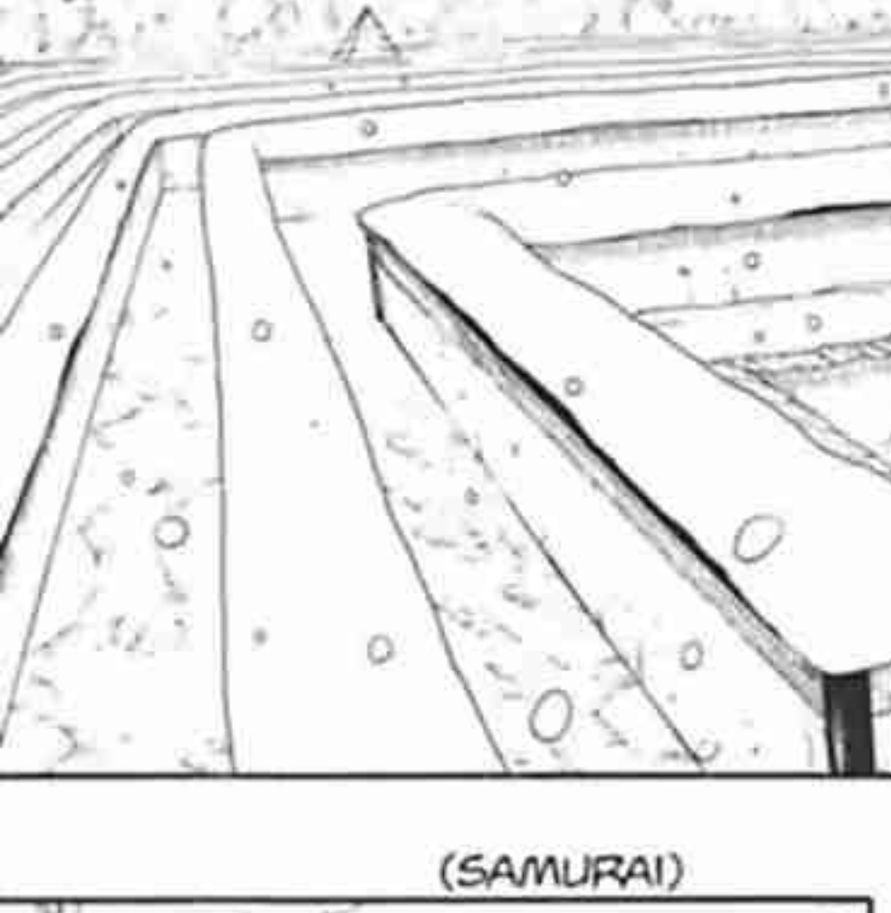


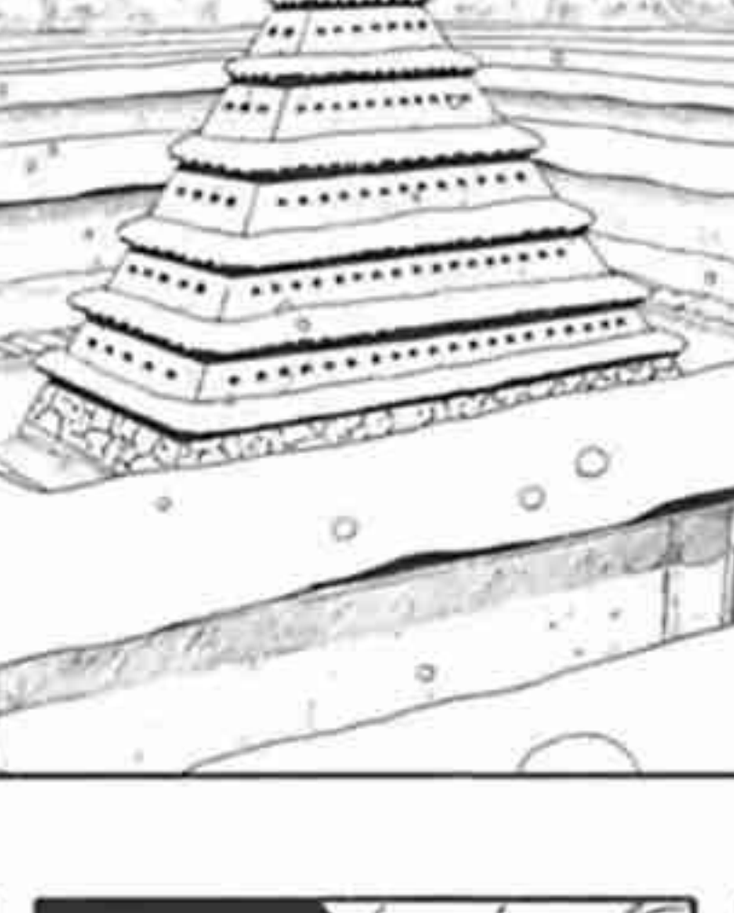
THAT'S HIM, THAT GEEZER IN THE MIDDLE.

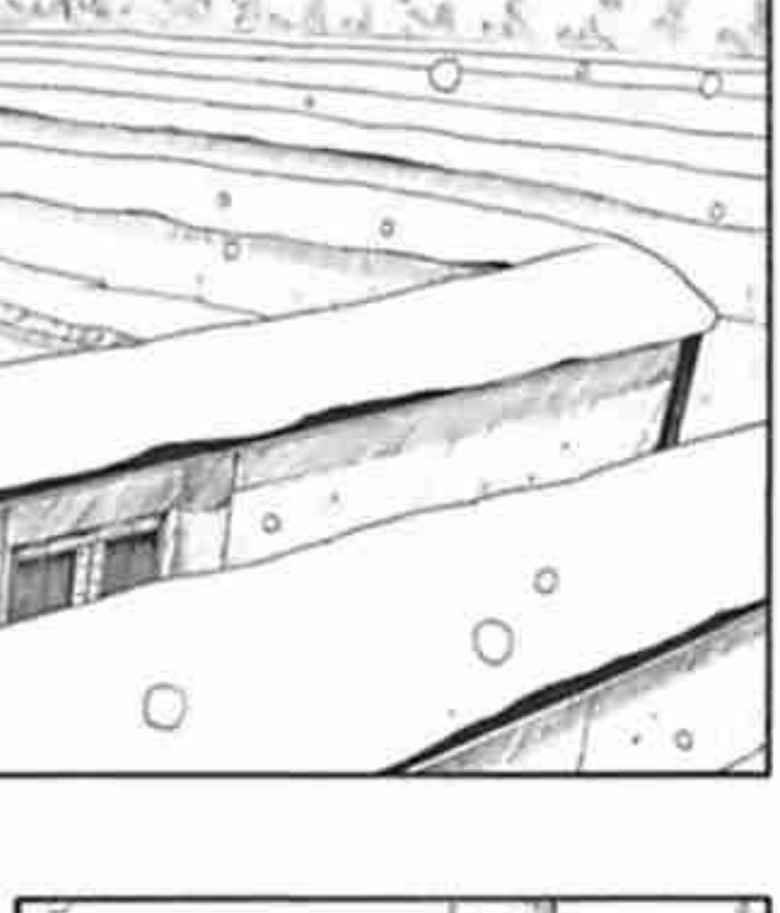
WE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.

SO THAT'S... DANZO.

(SAMURAI)





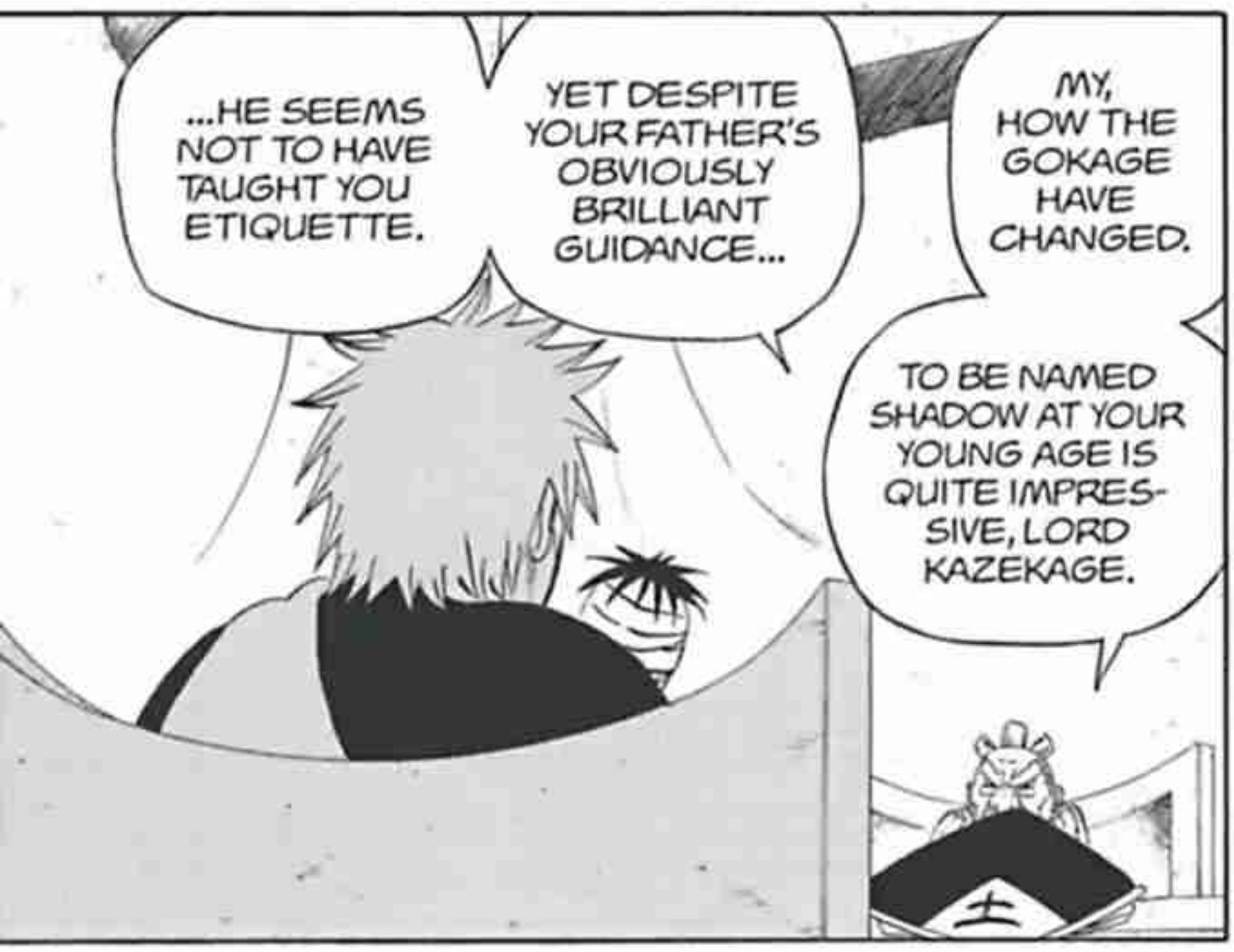


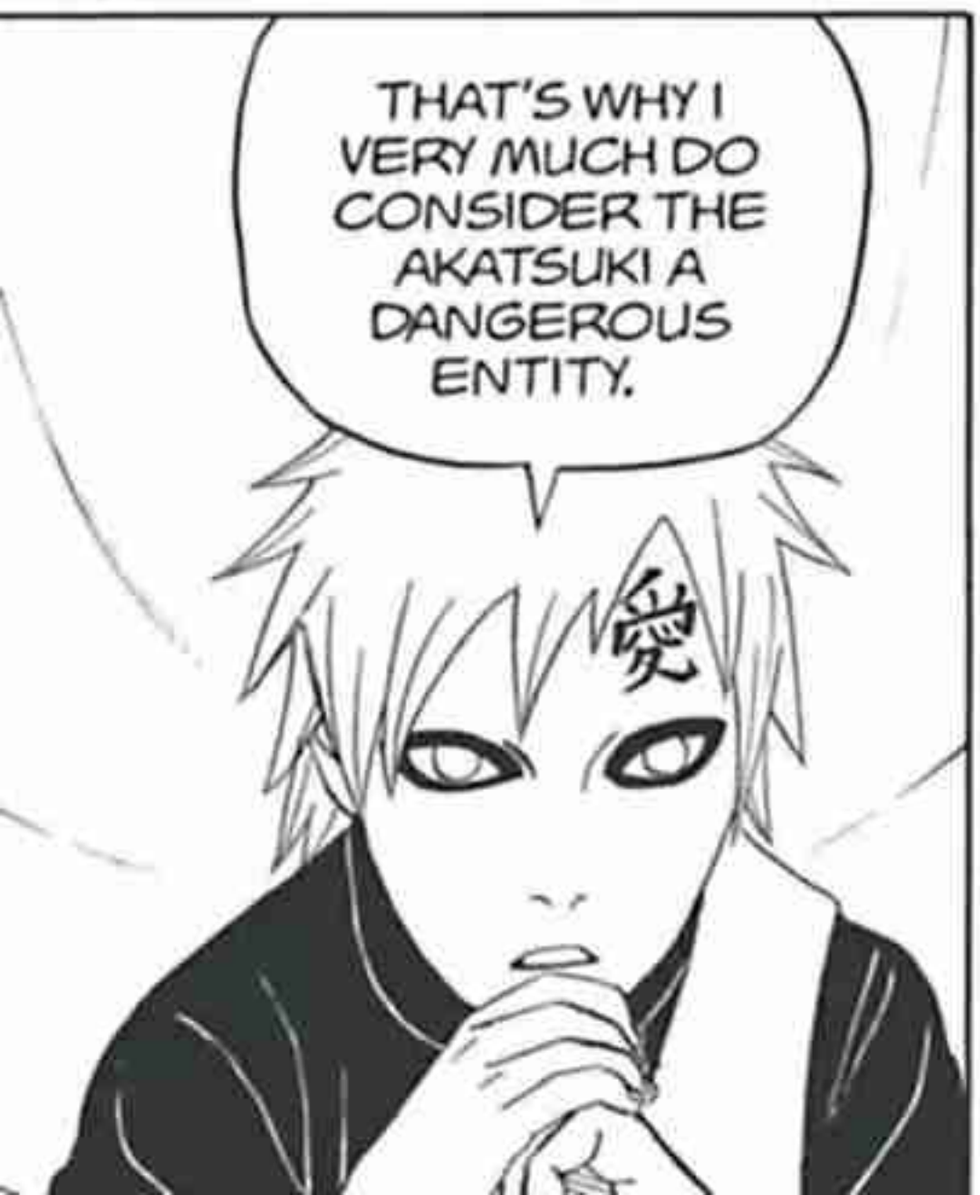
YOU, THE GOKAGE, ASSEMBLE HERE TODAY IN RESPONSE TO LORD RAIKAGE'S SUMMONS.

PLACE YOUR KAGE HEAD-PIECES BEFORE YOU...

NARUTO

Number 458: The Great Gokage Debate...!!



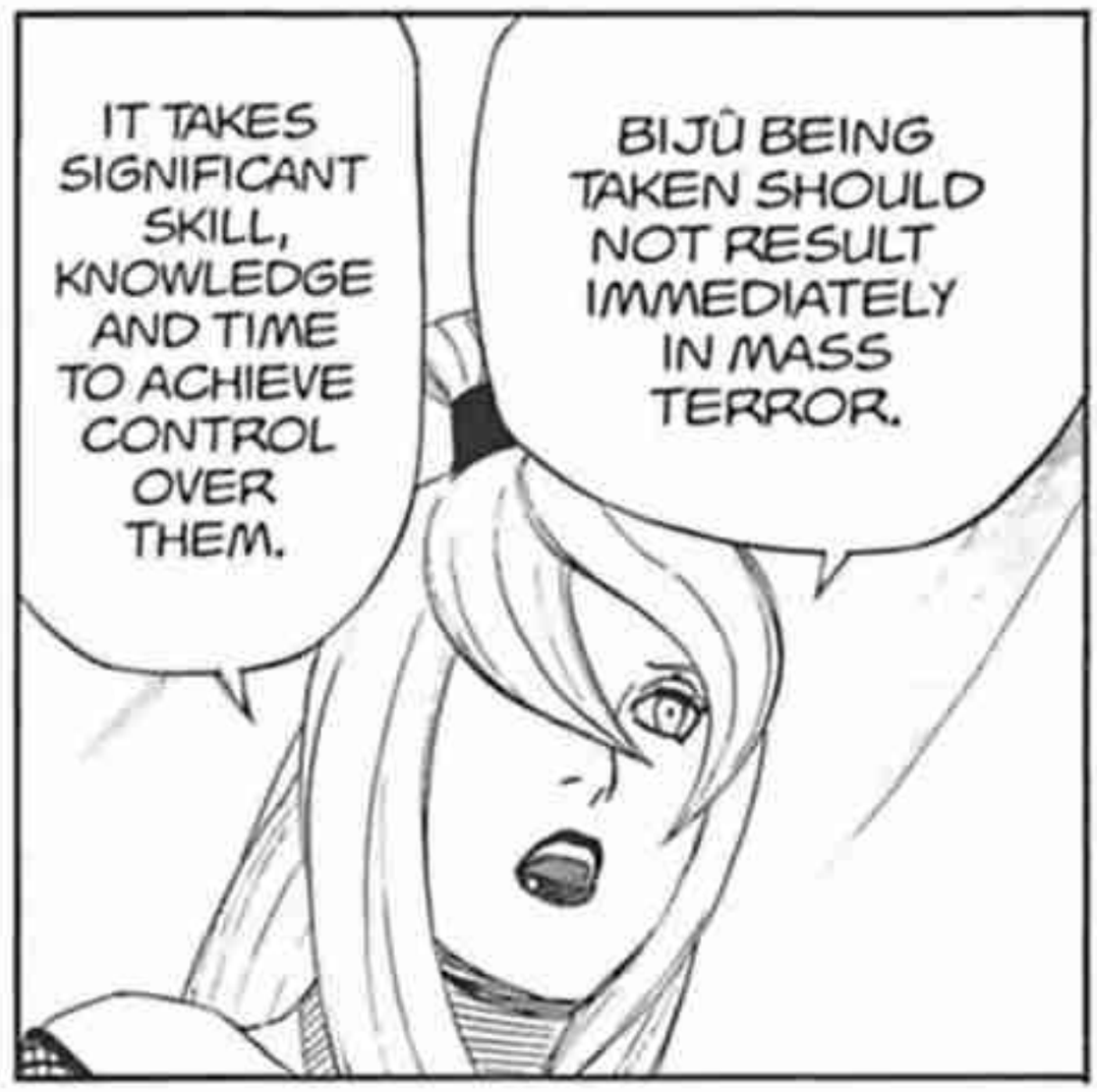


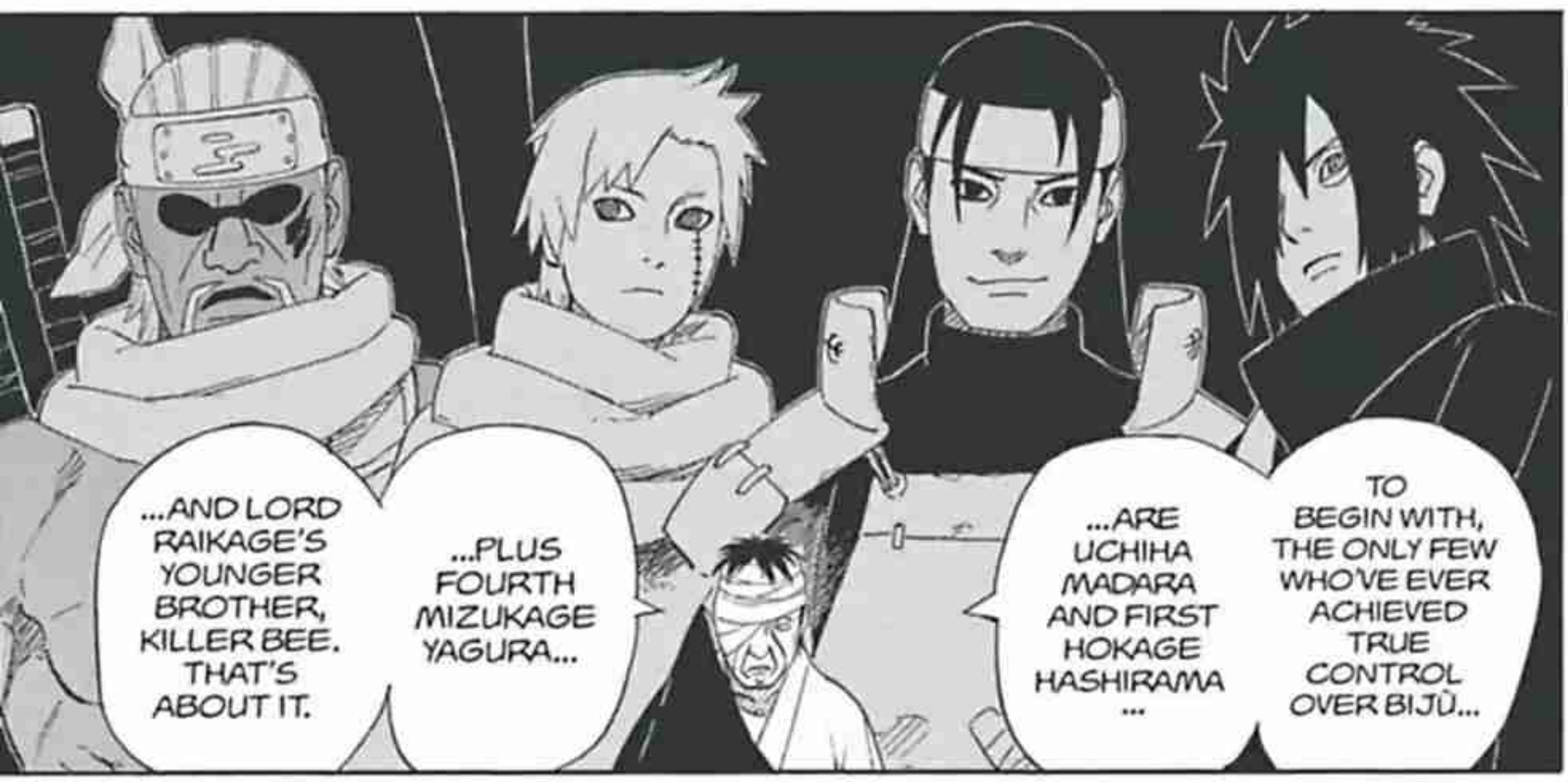
I'VE APPLIED TO YOU, THE OTHERS OF THE GOKAGE, FOR AID AND COOPERATION NUMEROUS TIMES AND BEEN ROUNDLY IGNORED.

...EXCEPT FOR THE PREVIOUS HOKAGE.

AFTER SO MANY OF THE JINCHÛRIKI HAVE BEEN TAKEN, TO COLLABORATE NOW IS SIMPLY TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE.

ISN'T THAT RIGHT... LORD KAZEKAGE?
...
IT IS NECESSARY FOR A JINCHÛRIKI TO MATURE TOGETHER WITH HIS OR HER BIJÛ TO ADAPT TO IT.
AND EVEN THEN, CONTROL IS DIFFICULT... IT'S NOT A SNAP OF THE FINGERS...


IT TAKES SIGNIFICANT SKILL, KNOWLEDGE AND TIME TO ACHIEVE CONTROL OVER THEM.
BIJÛ BEING TAKEN SHOULD NOT RESULT IMMEDIATELY IN MASS TERROR.

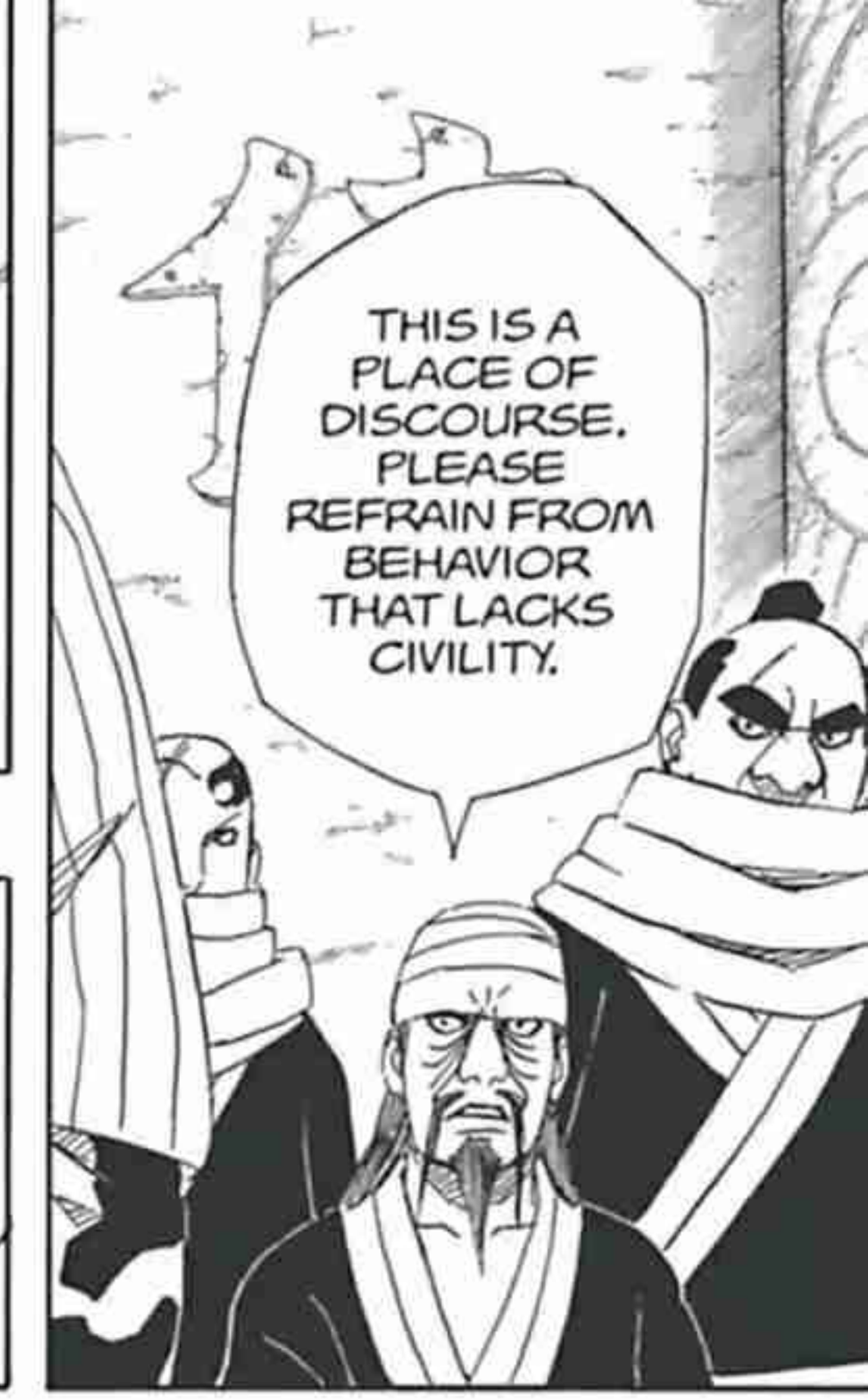

...AND LORD RAIKAGE'S YOUNGER BROTHER, KILLER BEE. THAT'S ABOUT IT.
...PLUS FOURTH MIZUKAGE YAGURA...
...ARE UCHIHA MADARA AND FIRST HOKAGE HASHIRAMA ...
TO BEGIN WITH, THE ONLY FEW WHO'VE EVER ACHIEVED TRUE CONTROL OVER BIJÛ...

YES!!
HUH
CHOJURO!

HOW-EVER ...
huh

SLAM
ENOUGH WITH THIS NONSENSE !!!
SCREECH

STAND DOWN, FOO, TORUNÉ.


THIS IS A PLACE OF DISCOURSE. PLEASE REFRAIN FROM BEHAVIOR THAT LACKS CIVILITY.

YOU TOO, KANKURO, TEMARI.

THUNK
...HUMPH!

ALRIGHTY THEN...
ROINK

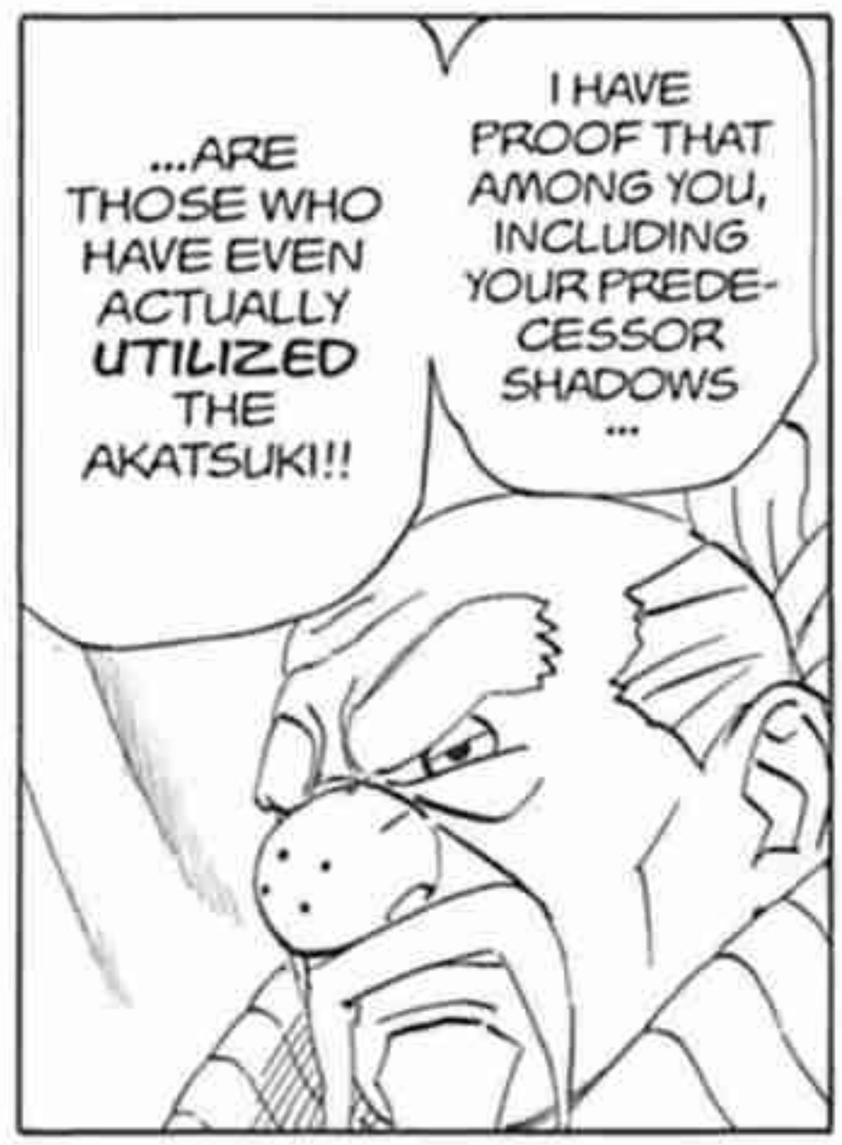
AO, CHOJURO, IT'S ALL RIGHT...
YES, MAAM.

SSH...

AND THAT'S NOT ALL!!
...LEAF! STONE! SAND! MIST!
THE AKATSUKI IS COMPOSED OF ROGUE SHINOBI FROM YOUR VILLAGES!

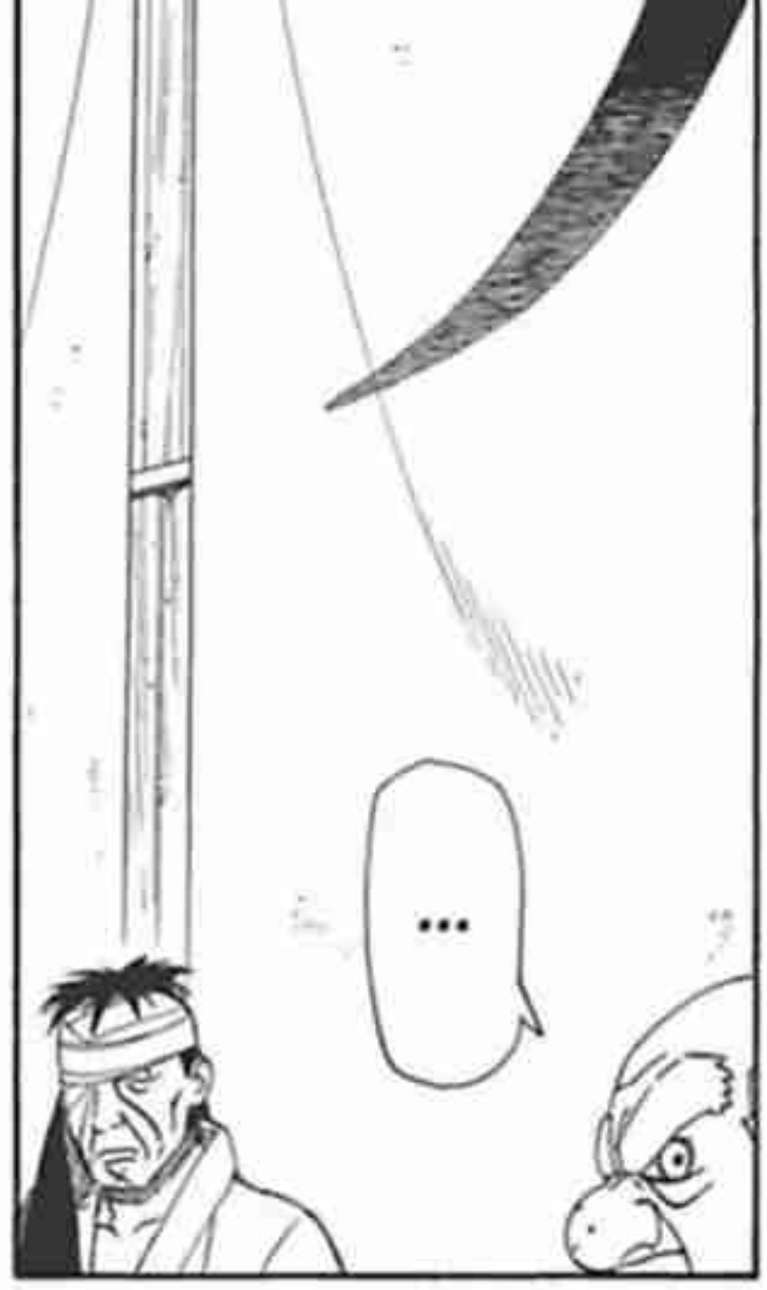
AND ORIGINALLY, I HAD NO INTEREST IN ANY DISCOURSE!
I DON'T TRUST ANY OF YOU!

UTILIZED ...?


...ARE THOSE WHO HAVE EVEN ACTUALLY UTILIZED THE AKATSUKI!!
I HAVE PROOF THAT AMONG YOU, INCLUDING YOUR PREDECESSOR SHADOWS ...

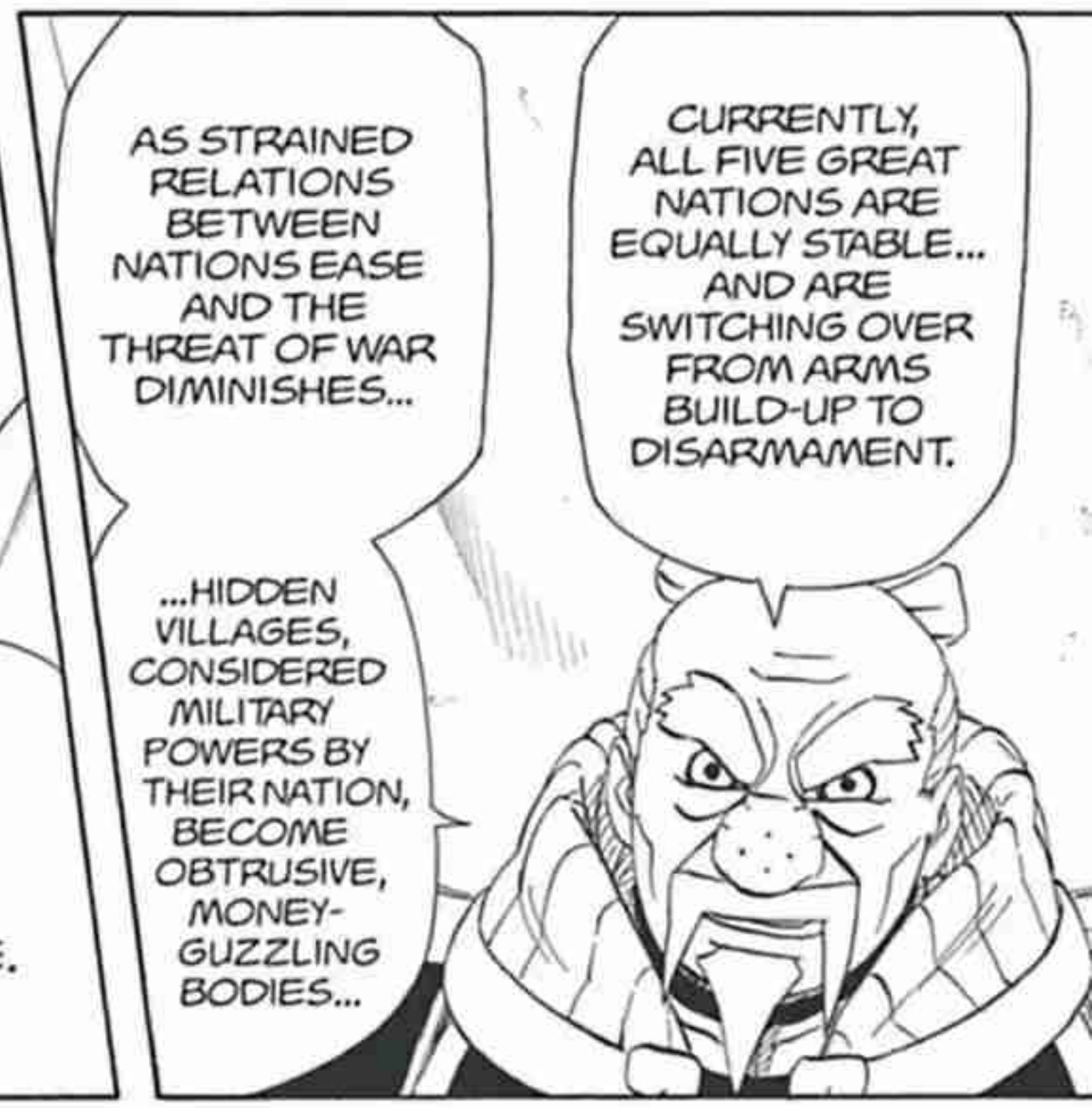
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY UTILIZED THE AKATSUKI ?!

...IS TO FINALLY QUESTION YOUR LOYALTIES !!!
BUT THE REASON WHY I'VE COME HERE AND SUMMONED YOU ALL...


...

YOU SAND HAVE PREVIOUSLY USED THE AKATSUKI IN BATTLE!
YOU'RE KAZEKAGE, AND YOU KNOW NOTHING?! JUST ASK YOUR VILLAGE'S GEEZER ELDERS!

WHAT IF WAR SUDDENLY BREAKS OUT?! TO RELY ON SHINOBI WITH NO ACTUAL BATTLE EXPERIENCE IS PROBLEMATIC TOO, NO?
AND YET, COMPLETELY ELIMINATING THEM RUNS ITS OWN RISK.
YOU'D LOSE THE BATTLE.


AS STRAINED RELATIONS BETWEEN NATIONS EASE AND THE THREAT OF WAR DIMINISHES...
...HIDDEN VILLAGES, CONSIDERED MILITARY POWERS BY THEIR NATION, BECOME OBTRUSIVE, MONEY-GUZZLING BODIES...
CURRENTLY, ALL FIVE GREAT NATIONS ARE EQUALLY STABLE... AND ARE SWITCHING OVER FROM ARMS BUILD-UP TO DISARMAMENT.

...SUCH AS THE AKATSUKI HANDY, EH.
SO ONE WAY TO AVOID THAT RISK IS HAVING A MERCENARY FORCE...

AND ON TOP OF IT ALL, THEY'VE DELIVERED SUPERIOR RESULTS.

FURTHER-MORE, THEY ACCEPT MILITARY CONTRACTS FOR CHEAP MONEY.

THE AKATSUKI MAKE THEIR LIVING THROUGH WAR-FARE AND ARE ALWAYS ON ACTIVE DUTY.

IT TAKES EFFORT AND MONEY TO CULTIVATE ACCOMPLISHED SHINOBI WITHIN ONE'S OWN HIDDEN VILLAGE.

THOUGH IT'S NOT CLEAR IF HE'D ALREADY DESERTED THE AKATSUKI BY THEN OR NOT!

IN THE FORM OF OROCHI-MARU...!

THE SAND USED THE AKATSUKI TO TRY TO BRING DOWN KONOHA.

HUMPH!

DON'T GO HIGH AND MIGHTY ON ME, TSUCHIKAGE!

IT'S ALSO HARD TO DISMISS THE POSSIBILITY THAT THIS WAS ALL PART OF AN EVEN LARGER PLOT.

AND BOTH THE PREVIOUS KAZEKAGE AND HOKAGE PERISHED AS A RESULT.

風

火

YOU OF THE MIST NEVER ENGAGE IN DIPLOMACY... AND THERE ARE EVEN RUMORS THAT YOUR VILLAGE IS THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE AKATSUKI!!

THE MOST SUSPECT OF ALL IS KIRIGAKURE!!

...I'D LIKE TO STATE THE POINT I WAS ABOUT TO MAKE EARLIER...
BEFORE YOU START ARGUING EACH OTHER'S MERITS ...
WHAT ?!

IN FACT, IT'S BECAUSE YOU, HEEDLESS OF APPEARANCES, WENT AROUND COLLECTING NINJUTSU, SEEKING POWER IN THIS ERA OF DISARMAMENT...
WATCH YOUR TONE, RAIKAGE!
...THAT WE WERE FORCED TO HIRE THE AKATSUKI IN ORDER TO COUNTER YOU!

THE AKATSUKI'S LEADER IS PROBABLY UCHIHA MADARA.

WHAT IS IT?!
RAWR

IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE HE'S NOT... BUT THIS IS FROM A PRETTY RELIABLE SOURCE.
SO HE REALLY IS A MONSTER, HUH...

I THOUGHT HE WAS LONG DEAD...?!

愛
?!

HOWEVER, WE CAN TURN THIS MISFORTUNE INTO A BLESSING... IT'S A RARE THING FOR ALL FIVE SHADOWS TO CONVENE IN ONE PLACE.

SO HOW THINK YOU... UNTIL THE AKATSUKI CAN BE DISPOSED OF...

HE BIDED HIS TIME AND WAITED FOR THE VARIOUS NATIONS TO STABILIZE, YET STILL DISTRUST EACH OTHER, TO EXPAND HIS POWER...

AT THIS RATE, HE MAY EVEN TARGET THE LAND OF IRON...

LET ME SAY THIS FROM MY STANDPOINT AS THE LEADER OF THIS NEUTRAL STATE...

...THE AKATSUKI LEADER DEFINITELY HAS HIS FINGER ON THE PULSE OF TIME...

...WHY NOT FORM THE WORLD'S FIRST UNITED SHINOBI ARMY... OF THE FIVE GREAT HIDDEN VILLAGES?

...TO WHOM DO YOU PROPOSE HANDING THE REINS OF THIS UNITED ARMY...?

AND ...

A STANDARDIZED CHAIN OF COMMAND WOULD ALSO BE IDEAL.

FURTHER CHAOS MUST BE AVOIDED.

WE ARE PRACTICALLY IN A STATE OF EMERGENCY... COOPERATION IS KEY.

...A SPLENDID PROPOSITION.

THIS IS GOING WELL.

A UNITED ARMY?!

AND NOW... TSUNADE'S TIME IS TRULY OVER.

WHO AMONG YOU GOKAGE IS MOST SUITABLE?
IF THE CHOICE WERE LEFT SOLELY TO YOU ALL, YOU WOULD SQUABBLE ...
...THUS, AS YOU HAVE DEEMED ME A NEUTRAL PARTY WORTHY OF PRESIDING OVER YOU, I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE THIS SUGGESTION...

HE GOT COMPLETELY BATTERED... BUT NEVER SOLD HIM OUT.
YEAH... IN ORDER TO PROTECT SASUKE.

NARUTO DID WHAT ...?!

...ALTHOUGH IT IS PROBABLY FUTILE...
AND NOW, HE'S GONE AFTER THE RAIKAGE TO ASK HIM TO FORGIVE SASUKE...
ESPE-CIALLY WITH KAKASHI AT HIS SIDE!
WHY WOULD HE BE SO RECK-LESS?

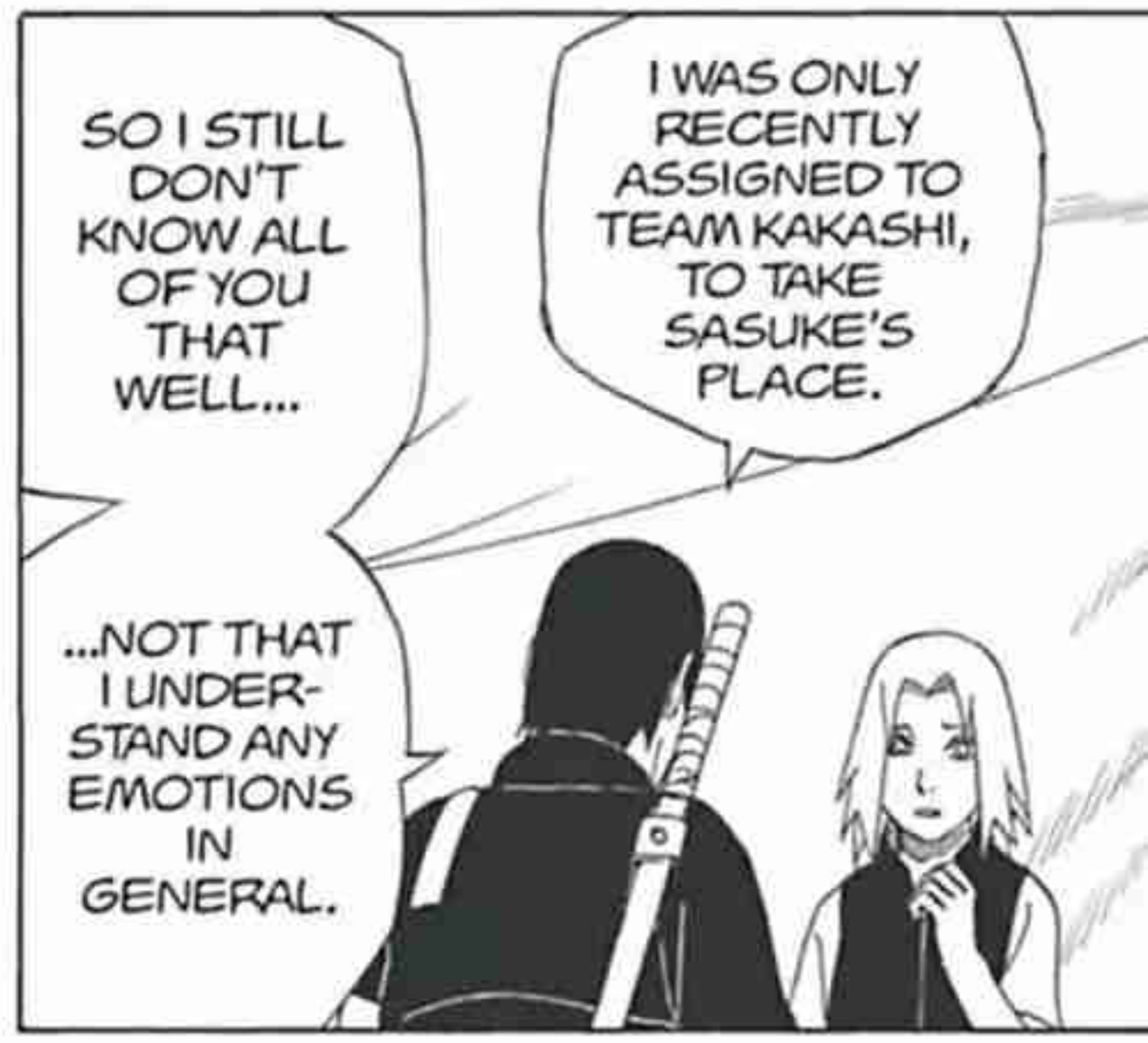
NARUTO ...

FURTHERMORE... IN ORDER TO PREVENT YOU FROM WORRYING, HE ASKED ME TO KEEP IT QUIET...
...

...

I FEEL THAT HE WANTED TO GIVE NARUTO THE CHANCE TO TRY, NO MATTER HOW FUTILE IT IS.
BECAUSE MASTER KAKASHI BELIEVES IN NARUTO.

I CAN'T EVEN KEEP MY PROMISES ...
...HOW CAN I?
...AND I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT PROMISE HE MADE TO YOU...


SO I STILL DON'T KNOW ALL OF YOU THAT WELL...
I WAS ONLY RECENTLY ASSIGNED TO TEAM KAKASHI, TO TAKE SASUKE'S PLACE.
...NOT THAT I UNDER-STAND ANY EMOTIONS IN GENERAL.

HOW-EVER ...

PLEASE... PLEASE BRING SASUKE BACK...
NARUTO, THIS... THIS IS MY WISH... OF A LIFE-TIME...

...!

...!!

...EVEN I CAN TELL THAT NARUTO ...
... REALLY LIKES YOU!!

I KNOW ALL TOO WELL...
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH NOW.

SHIMMER...

SAKURA, YOU SURE DO CARE ABOUT SASUKE...
Grin

SAKURA! I...
I WILL KEEP MY PROMISE.
'CAUSE THAT'S MY SHINOBI WAY...
I NEVER GO BACK ON MY WORD.

IT'S OKAY. I'LL BRING BACK SASUKE FOR SURE!
THAT'S MY PROMISE OF A LIFE-TIME!!

UNH...

DRIP

DRIP...

UNH ...

...BUT IT FEELS JUST LIKE WHAT I HAVE...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU SAID TO NARUTO ...

...AND THAT HE PLANS TO BEAR IT THE REST OF HIS LIFE.

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT NARUTO STILL BEARS THAT CROSS OF HIS PROMISE TO YOU...

UNH ...

SAKURA ...

...

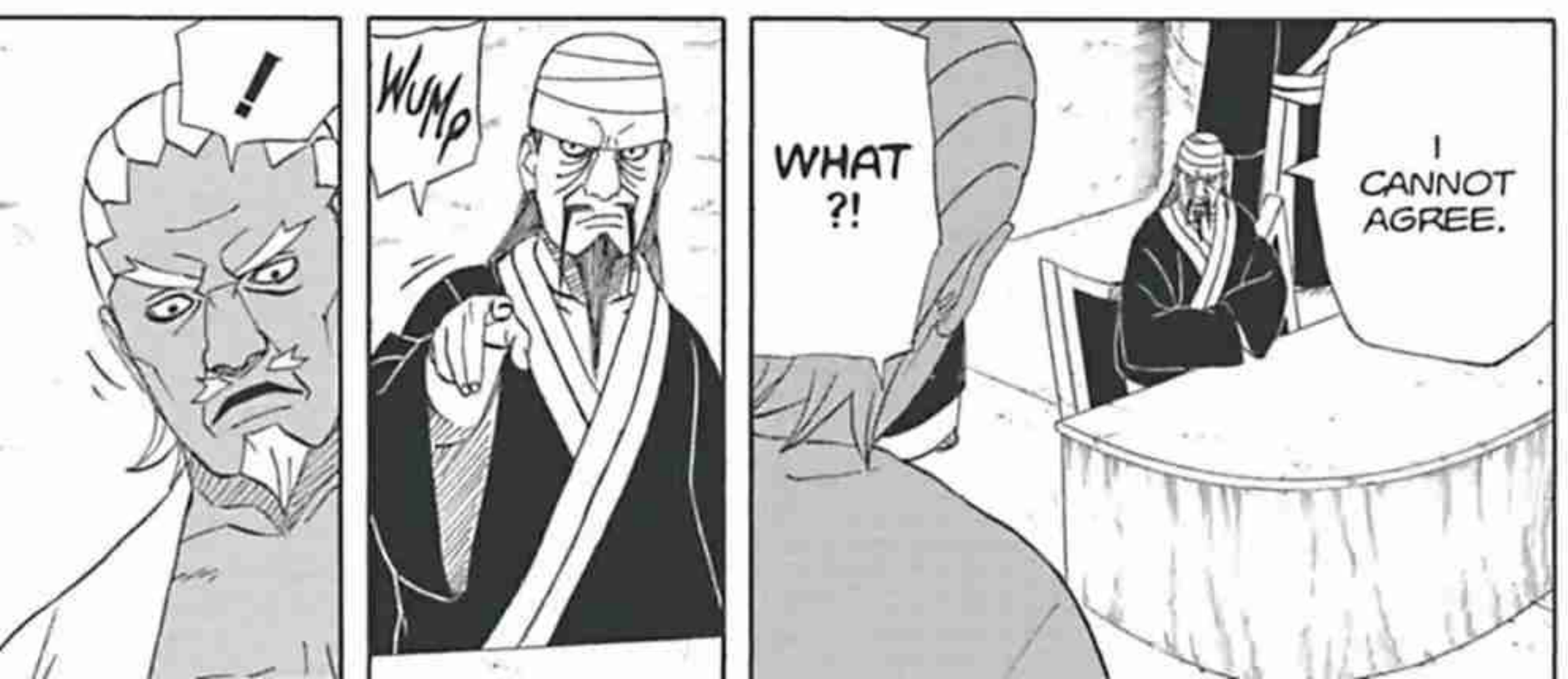
SASUKE IS CERTAINLY MAKING NARUTO SUFFER...

LIKE A CURSE MARK.

...BUT I THINK YOU MAY BE, TOO?

NARUTO

Number 459: Sakura's Resolve!!



...BUT SOMEONE SUCH AS YOURSELF WHOSE ACTS ARE **RULED** BY HIS EMOTIONS WOULD PROBABLY END UP SPLINTERING A UNITED ARMY JUST LIKE HE DID THAT DESK.

I AM WELL AWARE THAT A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF PASSION AND STRENGTH IS NECESSARY TO ASSEMBLE AND LEAD A FORCE OF POWER-HOUSES...

READ THIS WAY
I SHALL NOT AGREE TO ANY UNITED SHINOBI ARMY WHERE I WOULD HAVE TO REVEAL MY VILLAGE'S SECRETS!!
...NINE TAILS MUST NOT FALL INTO THEIR HANDS...
WHILE WE DO NOT KNOW FOR WHAT PURPOSE THE AKATSUKI ARE COLLECTING THE BIJÛ...
THUS, I FEEL IT APPRO-PRIATE THAT THE HOKAGE BE NAMED THE–
NINE TAILS IS KONOHA'S PROPERTY.
HUH?
CHOJURO... PREPARE FOR BATTLE.
...ABOUT THIS... I NEED TO CHECK IT OUT...
...SOME-THING'S JUST NOT SITTING RIGHT...
CRRRRRRR
PLIINK
BYAKUGAN !!

UNH...
UNH...

THINGS ARE DIFFERENT NOW THAN THEY WERE BEFORE!
IT CAN'T BE HELPED!

STOP CRYING, INO!

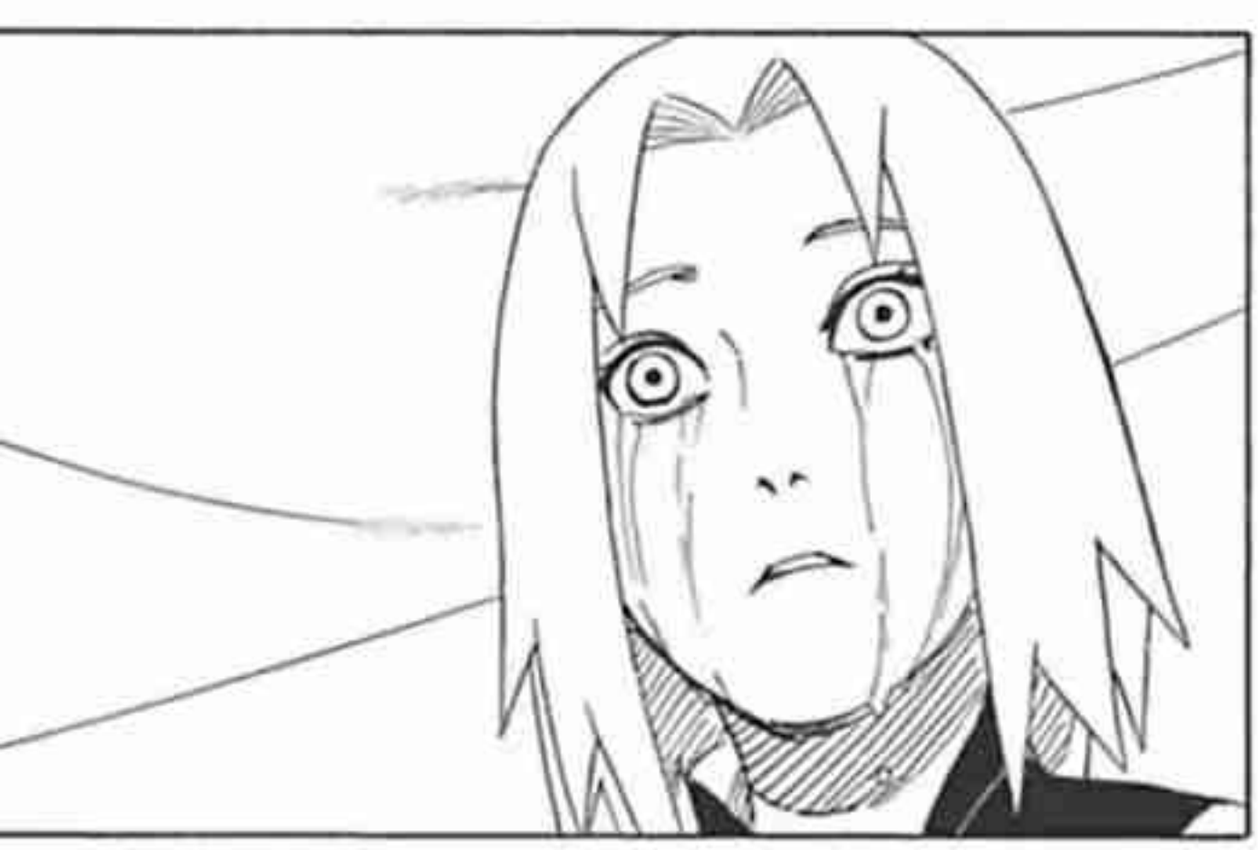
DON'T TALK TO HER LIKE THAT! INO IS...

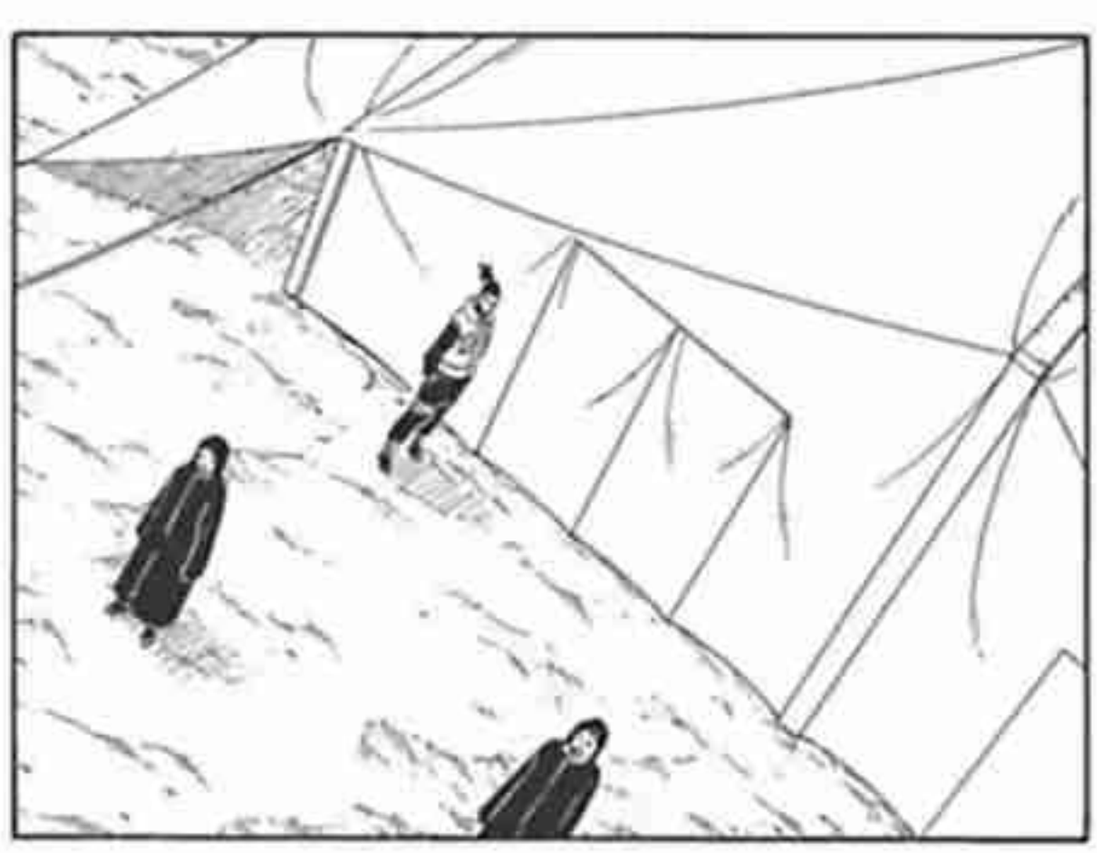
UNH... UNH...
INO...

THAT'S WHY HE VOLUNTEERED TO BE THE PERSUADER.
...FOR WHICH HE STILL FEELS SOMEWHAT RESPON-SIBLE...

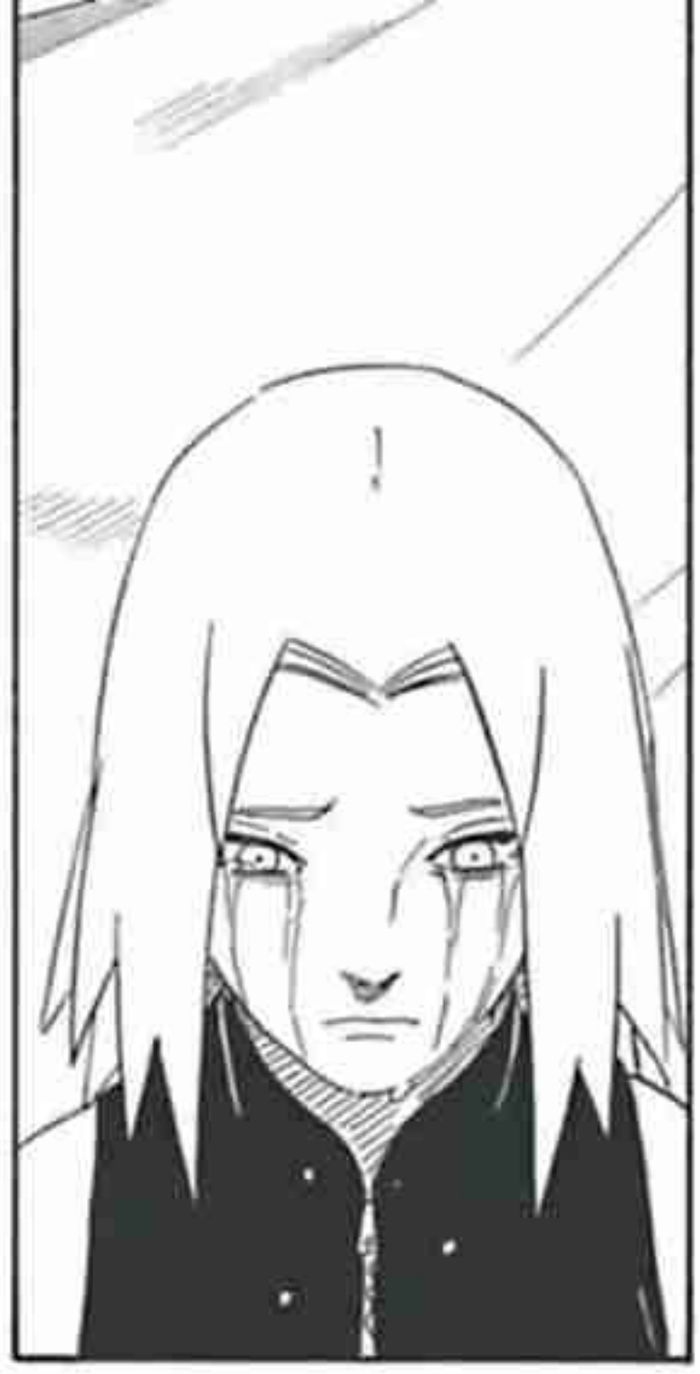
IF INO'S REACTING LIKE THIS...
...SAKURA AND NARUTO WILL BE EVEN MORE...
YOU SURE ABOUT THIS?

PLUS, THERE'S THAT FIRST MISSION OF HIS AS PLATOON LEADER THAT FAILED...
LET'S LET SHIKAMARU HANDLE IT.
HE ALWAYS KNOWS THE BEST WAY TO SAY THINGS...

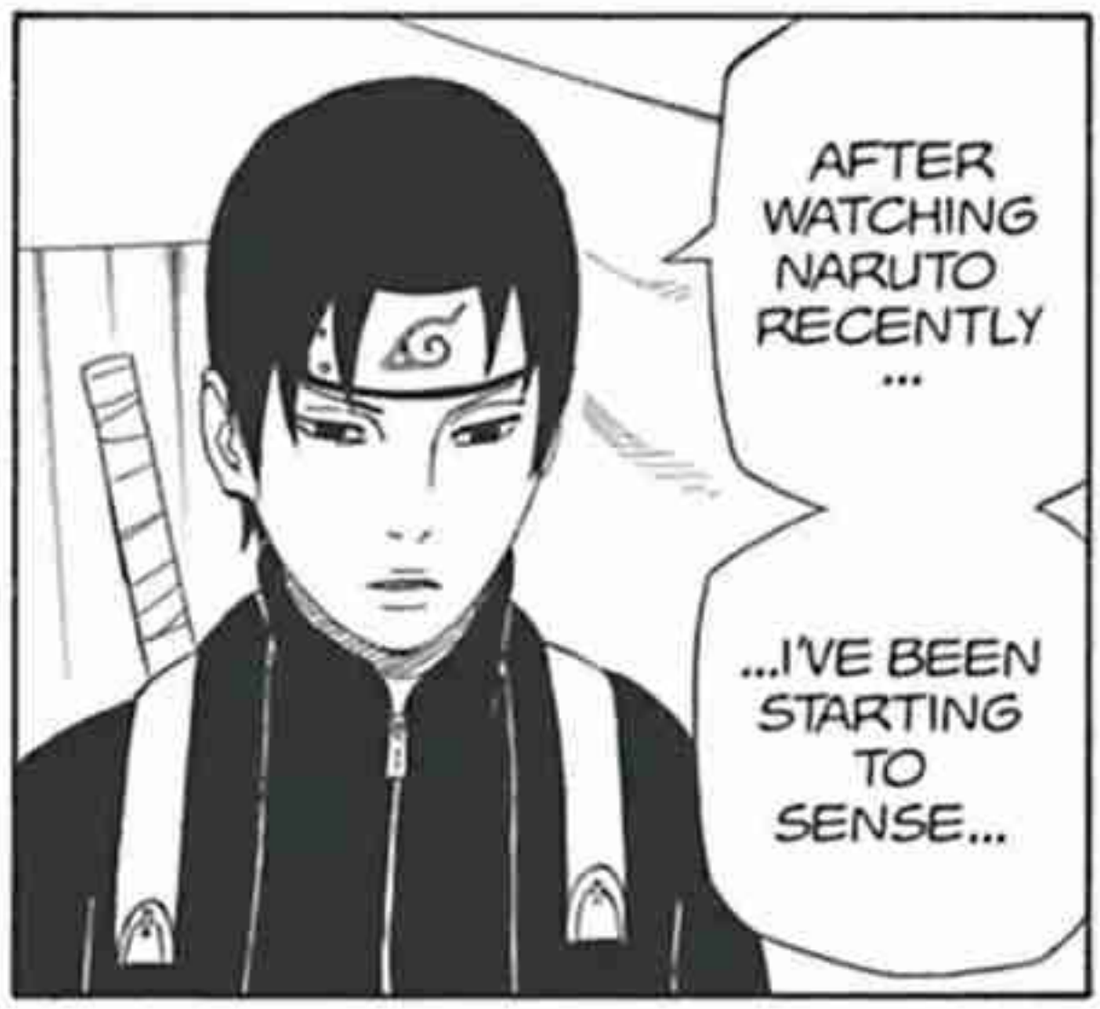


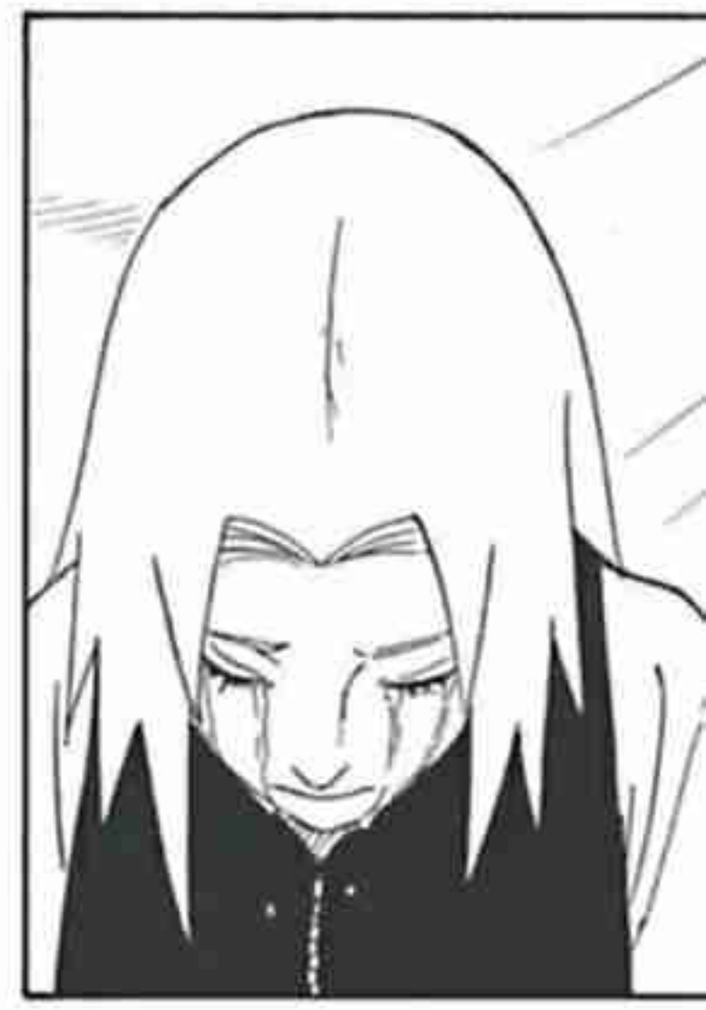


I TOTALLY AGREE WITH YOU.
NARUTO HIMSELF GENUINELY WANTS TO RESCUE SASUKE...
...NOT JUST BECAUSE HE PROMISED SAKURA!


!

...BOTH SAKURA AND I AND EVERYONE ELSE RELY ON NARUTO TOO MUCH.
BUT...


AFTER WATCHING NARUTO RECENTLY ...
...I'VE BEEN STARTING TO SENSE...

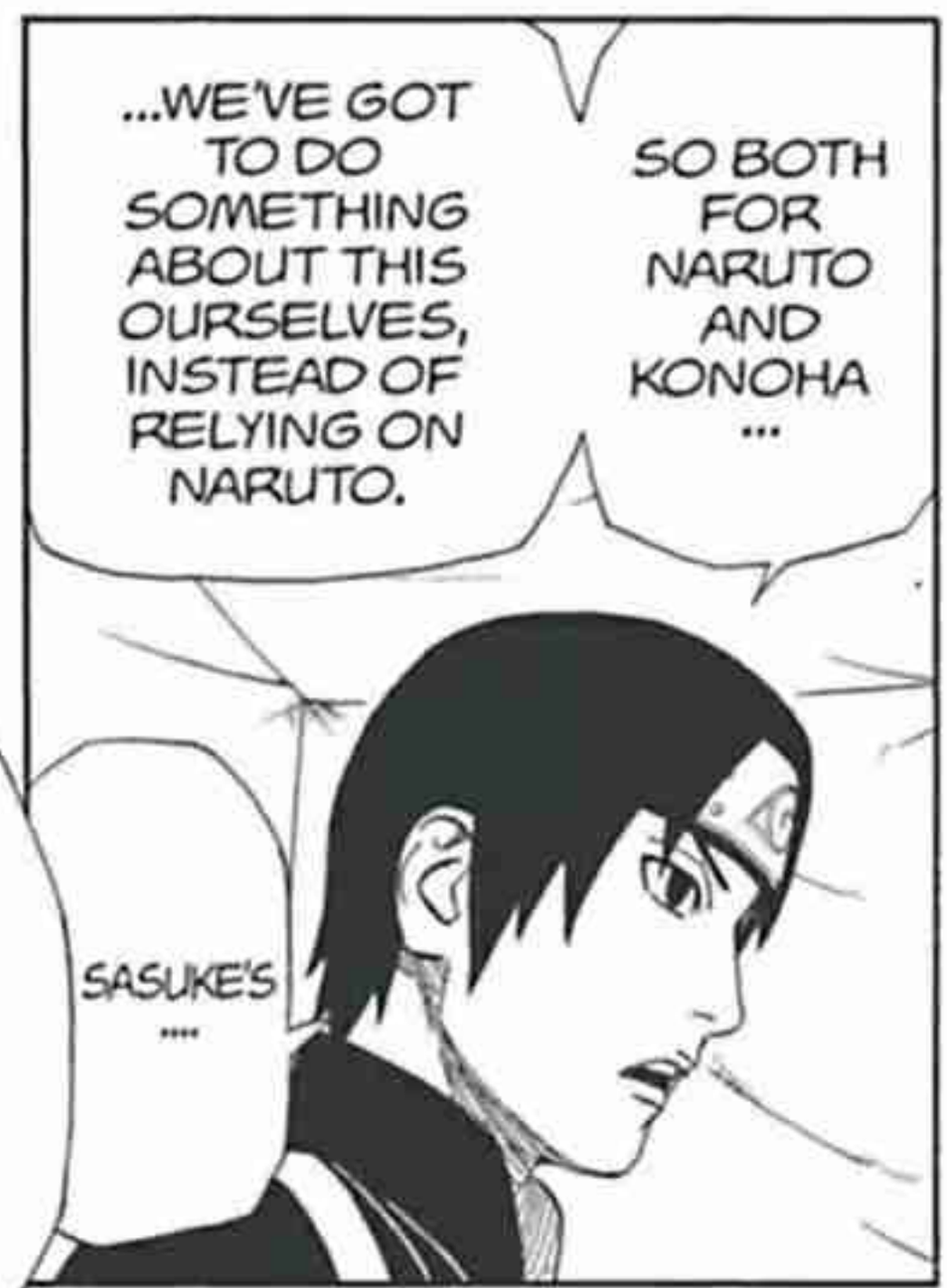


AND THEN WHEN I THINK ABOUT SASUKE... MY BELLY STARTS FEELING HOT...

THE SADNESS ...

...AND I'VE COME TO KNOW THAT THAT'S ANGER.

IT'S JUST AS SAI SAYS...


...WE'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS OURSELVES, INSTEAD OF RELYING ON NARUTO.
SO BOTH FOR NARUTO AND KONOHA ...
SASUKE'S ....

WE NEED TO STOP THE AKATSUKI ...
WE'RE NOT KIDS ANY-MORE.
SHUP...

...

!
SHIKA-MARU...
SHF

...

...AND WE NEED TO STOP SASUKE.

I CAME HERE TO ASK THE CONSENT OF CELL NUMBER SEVEN'S MEMBERS.
CONSENT? DON'T TELL ME...?!

WE CAN'T LET KONOHAGAKURE AND KUMOGAKURE ENTER INTO WAR BECAUSE OF SASUKE.
YEAH... THAT'S RIGHT.

...NEITHER I NOR CHOJI, NOR MASTER INOICHI OR YOUR PARENTS, WILL STAY SILENT. WE'D AVENGE YOU.
...AND IF YOU TWO OR INO WERE TO RECKLESSLY LASH OUT AND GET KILLED BY CLOUD NINJA...

IF KUMOGAKURE KILLS SASUKE, YOU AND INO AND ESPECIALLY NARUTO AREN'T APT TO JUST LET IT BE...
LET ME EXPLAIN... IT'LL BE A BIT ROUND-ABOUT, BUT BEAR WITH ME.

READ THIS WAY
IF SASUKE CONTINUES TO ALIGN HIMSELF WITH THE AKATSUKI AND INCREASE HATRED AGAINST HIM EVERYWHERE...
FROM WHAT THAT CLOUD COURIER MENTIONED ...
...THEY ALREADY REGARD SASUKE AS AN INTERNATIONAL FELON.
AND IF I OR CHOJI WERE TO GET KILLED...
...NEXT, OUR FATHERS WOULD SET OUT, AND BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, IT'D BE A FULL-BLOWN WAR.
THEN THE OTHER SIDE WON'T STAY SILENT... AND THEY'D RETALIATE.
YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M SAYING... RIGHT...? SAKURA ...?
...I FEEL HE OUGHT TO BE DEALT WITH BY KONOHA'S HAND.
...
SHIKAMARU ...
SAKURA, WHAT SAY YOU...
THAT'S WHAT THE CONSENT IS FOR...
DRIP...
DRIP...

...JUST DON'T...

...SAY ANY MORE...

Drip

Drip

SASUKE... WHERE ARE YOU RIGHT NOW... AND WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT?

OR IS IT EVEN MORE PAINFUL THAN BEFORE?
DO YOU FEEL RE-LIEVED NOW ...?
...AND ACHIEVED VEN-GEANCE ...
YOU DEFEATED YOUR BROTHER, ITACHI...

...
WHIRF...

DO YOU EVER THINK EVEN A LITTLE ABOUT ME OR SAKURA... OR EVEN MASTER KAKASHI, AT ALL...?

...WHY WON'T YOU COME HOME TO KONOHA ...?
SASUKE...

I...
SWFF

DID YOU REALLY JUST BECOME AN ORDINARY CRIMINAL ...?
WERE YOU DONE IN BY THE HATRED, SASUKE?

...I'M STARTING TO NOT UNDER-STAND YOU...

GOT IT?
YEAH ...

!
!
HEY? WHERE'D HE GO?

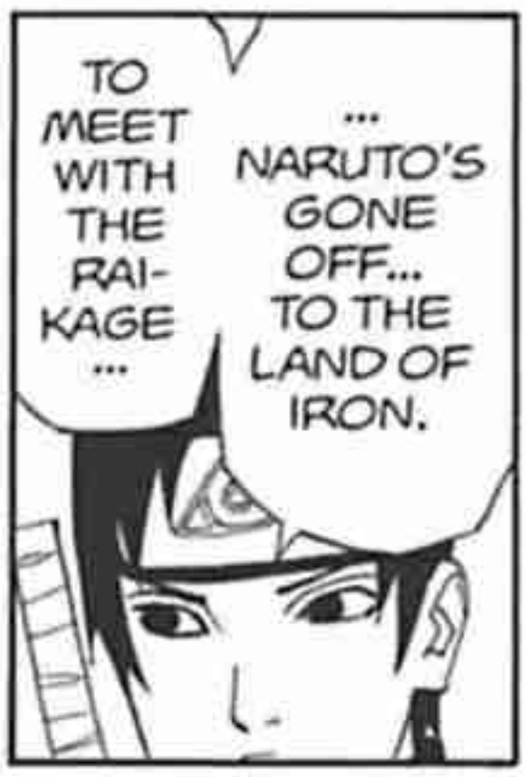
HUMPH ...

THEN BEGIN.

SQK

SQK

HE'S ALREADY ...
!


TO MEET WITH THE RAI-KAGE ...
... NARUTO'S GONE OFF... TO THE LAND OF IRON.

I'LL GO TALK TO NARUTO ABOUT THIS...
WHERE IS HE?
AND I'M SORRY, SAKURA... BUT NO MATTER WHAT YOUR ANSWER IS, I'M GOING TO PROCEED FORWARD IN THE BEST INTEREST OF KONOHA'S FUTURE.

!
!
!

I'LL... TALK TO NARUTO...
THIS SURE ISN'T GOING TO BE EASY...

I'M ALWAYS MAKING MISTAKES AND FALLING SHORT...

I WAS THE ONE WHO CAUSED NARUTO THE MOST PAIN...

I DON'T WANT TO BE WRONG... OR FAIL ANYMORE.

LET ME TAKE ON THAT ROLE.

...SINCE HE'S THE FOOL THAT FELL FOR ME.

HE WAS A FORMIDABLE FOE THAT I FOUGHT AGAINST ONCE... I'LL NEVER FORGET HIS COLOR!

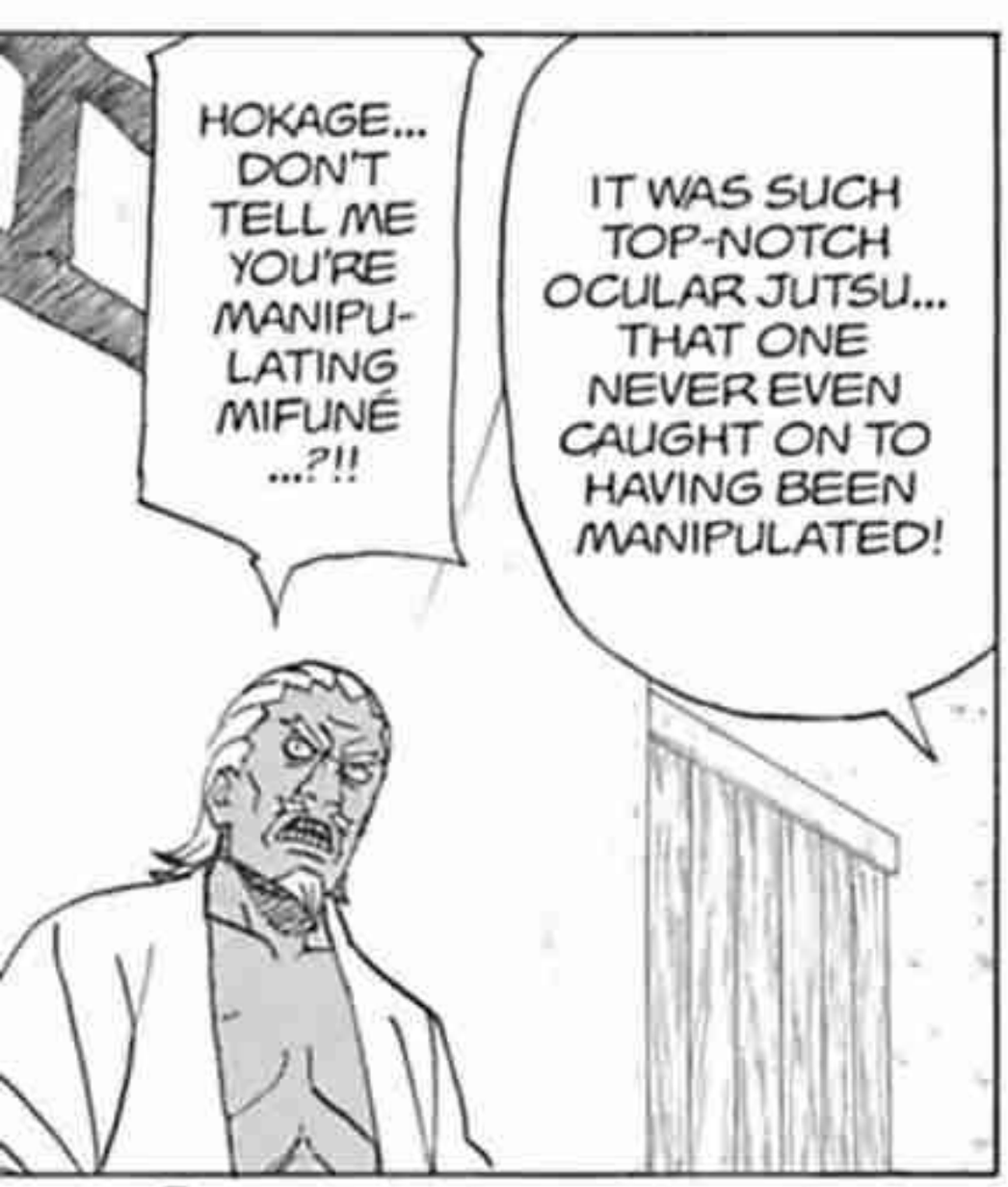
...IT'S UCHIHA SHISUI'S !!

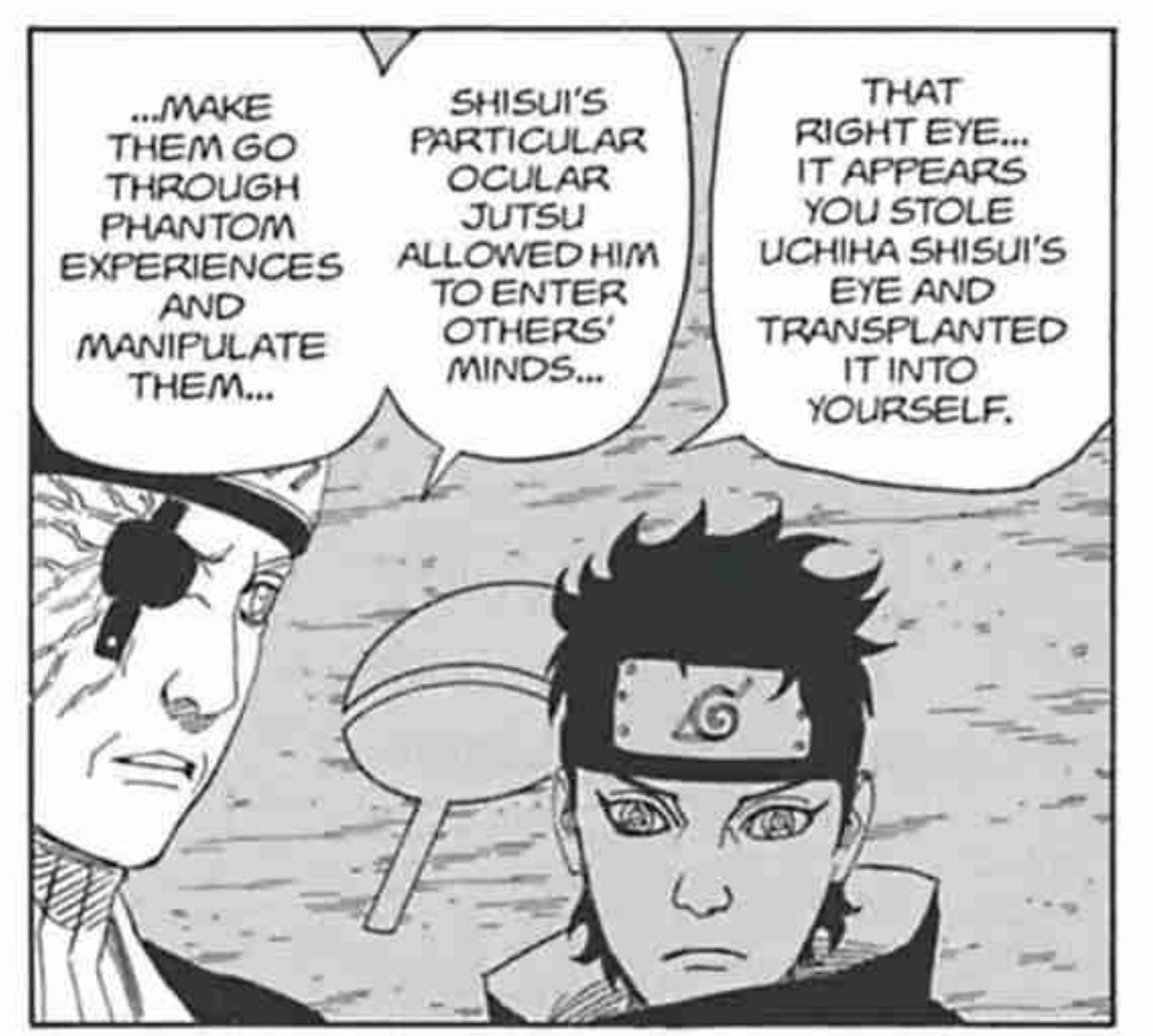
THE CHAKRA COLOR OF DANZO'S RIGHT SHOULDER AND RIGHT ARM... IN ADDITION TO THAT RIGHT EYE... THERE'S NO MISTAKE...

W-WHAT THE...?! HOW COULD THIS BE?

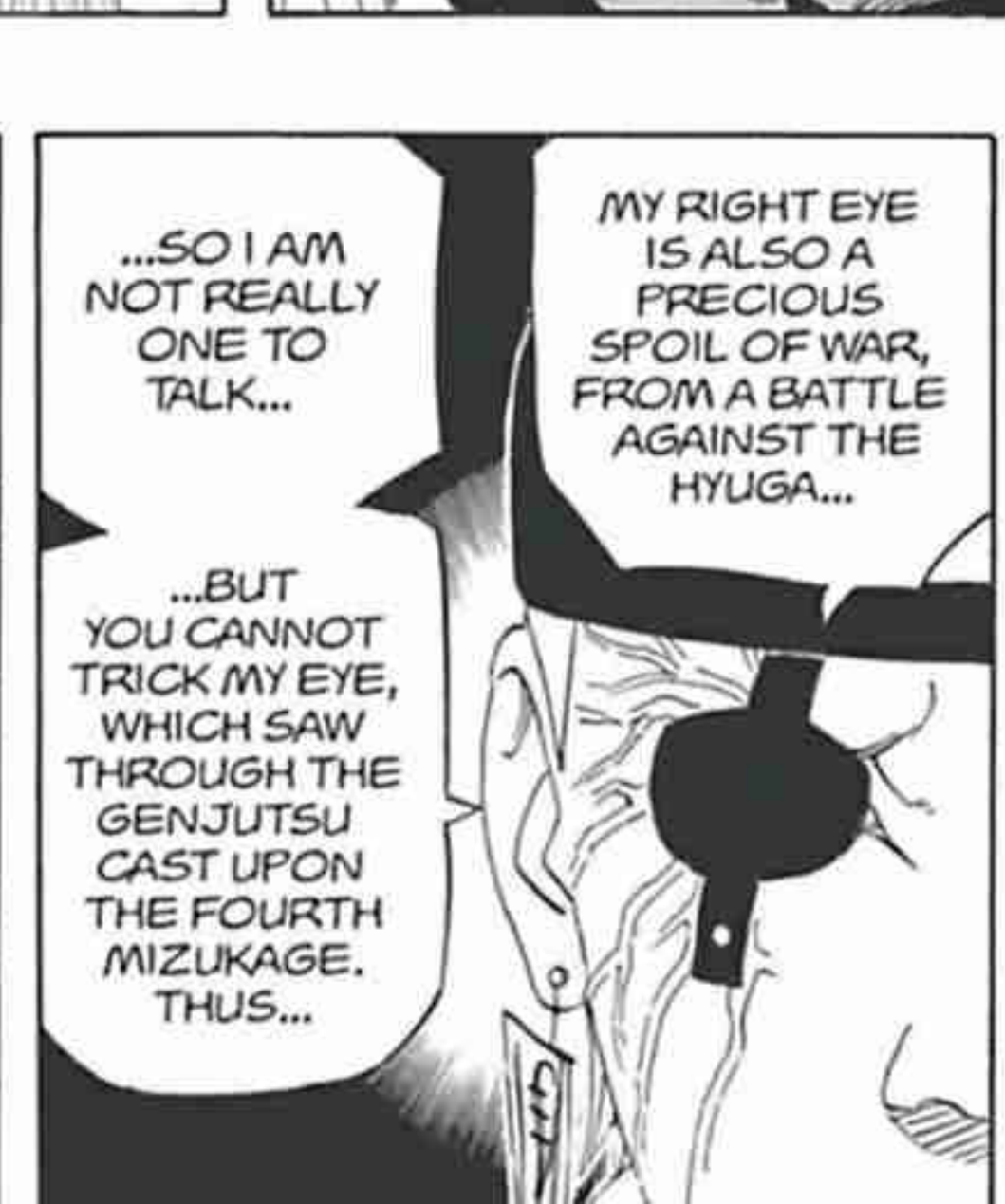
...
WHAT IS THIS?

WUMP
LORD HOKAGE, PLEASE SHOW US THAT RIGHT EYE THAT YOU KEEP SWATHED IN BANDAGES!
?!
?!


HOKAGE... DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE MANIPU-LATING MIFUNÉ ...?!!
IT WAS SUCH TOP-NOTCH OCULAR JUTSU... THAT ONE NEVER EVEN CAUGHT ON TO HAVING BEEN MANIPULATED!


...MAKE THEM GO THROUGH PHANTOM EXPERIENCES AND MANIPULATE THEM...
SHISUI'S PARTICULAR OCULAR JUTSU ALLOWED HIM TO ENTER OTHERS' MINDS...
THAT RIGHT EYE... IT APPEARS YOU STOLE UCHIHA SHISUI'S EYE AND TRANSPLANTED IT INTO YOURSELF.

BAM
YOU ...!!


...SO I AM NOT REALLY ONE TO TALK...
...BUT YOU CANNOT TRICK MY EYE, WHICH SAW THROUGH THE GENJUTSU CAST UPON THE FOURTH MIZUKAGE. THUS...
MY RIGHT EYE IS ALSO A PRECIOUS SPOIL OF WAR, FROM A BATTLE AGAINST THE HYUGA...

...?!

!!

!

!!!

ZWOOOP

WELL, HELLO THERE ...!

!!!

!!

I WONDER WHERE HE COULD BE...?

UCHIHA SASUKE HAS INVADED THIS PLACE.

IS HE AKA-TSUKI ?!

HE IS.

WHAT NOW?!

THOM THOM THOM THOM

NARUTO

Number 460: Trapping Sasuke...!!

CHA

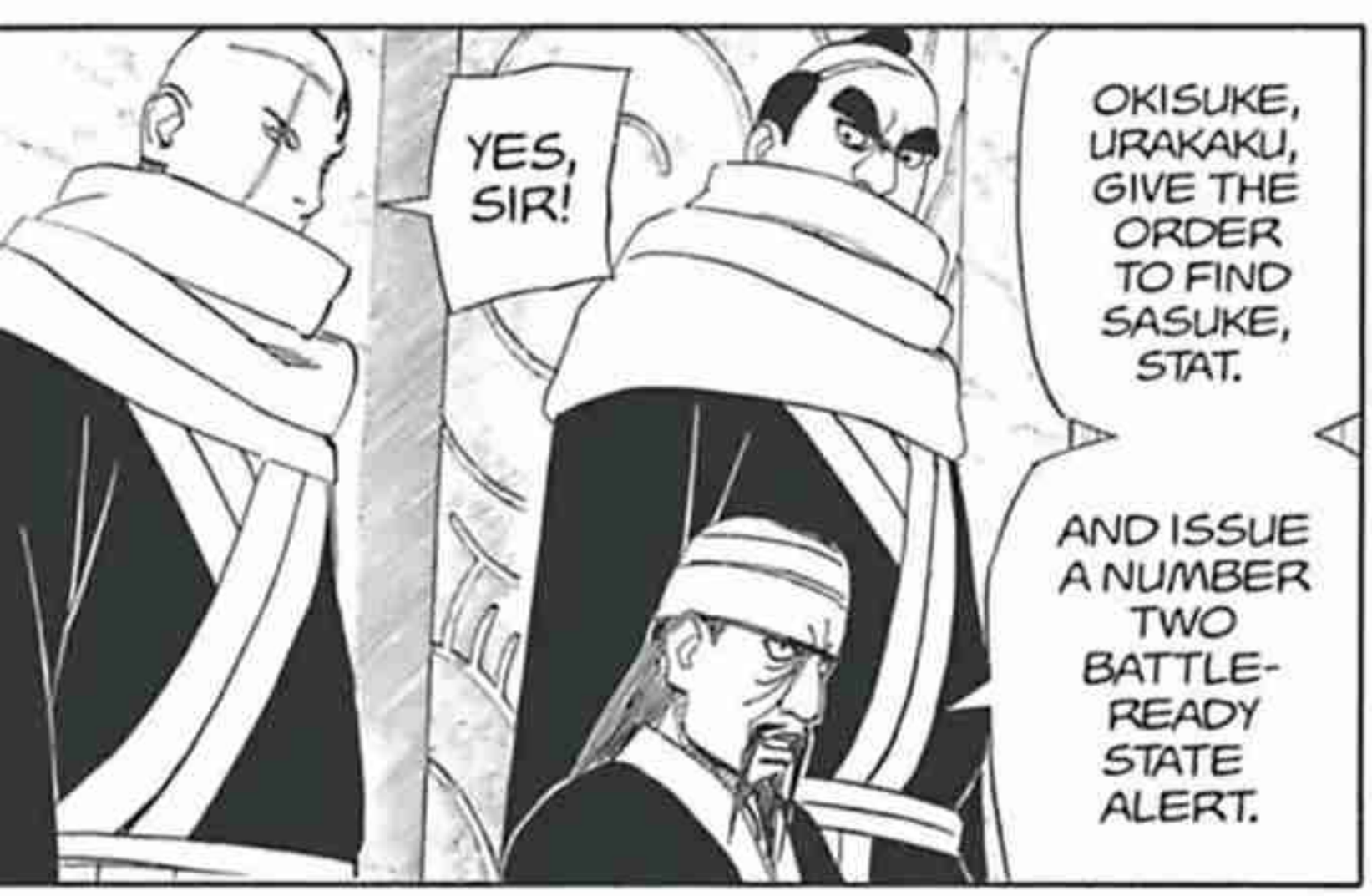
WHERE'S UCHIHA SASUKE?! ANSWER ME!!

?!!

Number 460: Trapping Sasuke...!!

IF WE'D RESTRAINED AND INTERROGATED HIM, WE MIGHT HAVE OBTAINED INTEL ON THE AKATSUKI!
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO KILL HIM!

NOW! START IT!!
YES, SIR!
SLUMP


YES, SIR!
OKISUKE, URAKAKU, GIVE THE ORDER TO FIND SASUKE, STAT.
AND ISSUE A NUMBER TWO BATTLE-READY STATE ALERT.

THEY'RE HARD-CORE INTENSE.
THE AKATSUKI ARE NOT CHATTER-BOXES.

...

FSH

KEEP THAT EYE TRAINED ON THE HOKAGE!
YOU, ONE-EYED MIST FELLA!
!

SHEE! DARUI! COME!!

KA

BROOM

THAT UNRULY CLOUD LAD HASN'T CHANGED A BIT, EVEN AFTER BECOMING A SHADOW...

WHAT A TRULY VIOLENT FELLOW.

HEY, DARUI, QUIT YAPPING AND LET'S GO!

I'M SO SORRY ABOUT THE DESK AND THE WALL...

THIS IS... SHING ?!

AFFIR-MATIVE.

DISPATCH THREE SQUADS TO THE TOWER ENTRANCE, STAT. SET UP A DEFENSIVE LINE.

NUMBER TWO BATTLE-READY STATE ALERT. SEARCH OUT THE INTRUDER UCHIHA SASUKE.

KLIK

...
I BET IT WAS ZETSU.

WHAT'S THE MATTER, KARIN?
I THINK THEY'RE LOOKING FOR US!
THE SAMURAI'S MOVEMENTS HAVE SUDDENLY BECOME FLURRIED!

KLAK
KLAK
KLAK

!

SSH

TA
KSHNK

KLIK

WANNA TALK, UZUMAKI NARUTO?

?!!

Y-YOU'RE !!

SHA

UGH!

VMP

TMP

BUT YOU KNOW IT DOESN'T WORK ON ME, RIGHT?

A RASENGAN RIGHT OFF THE BAT, HUH...

BA

M

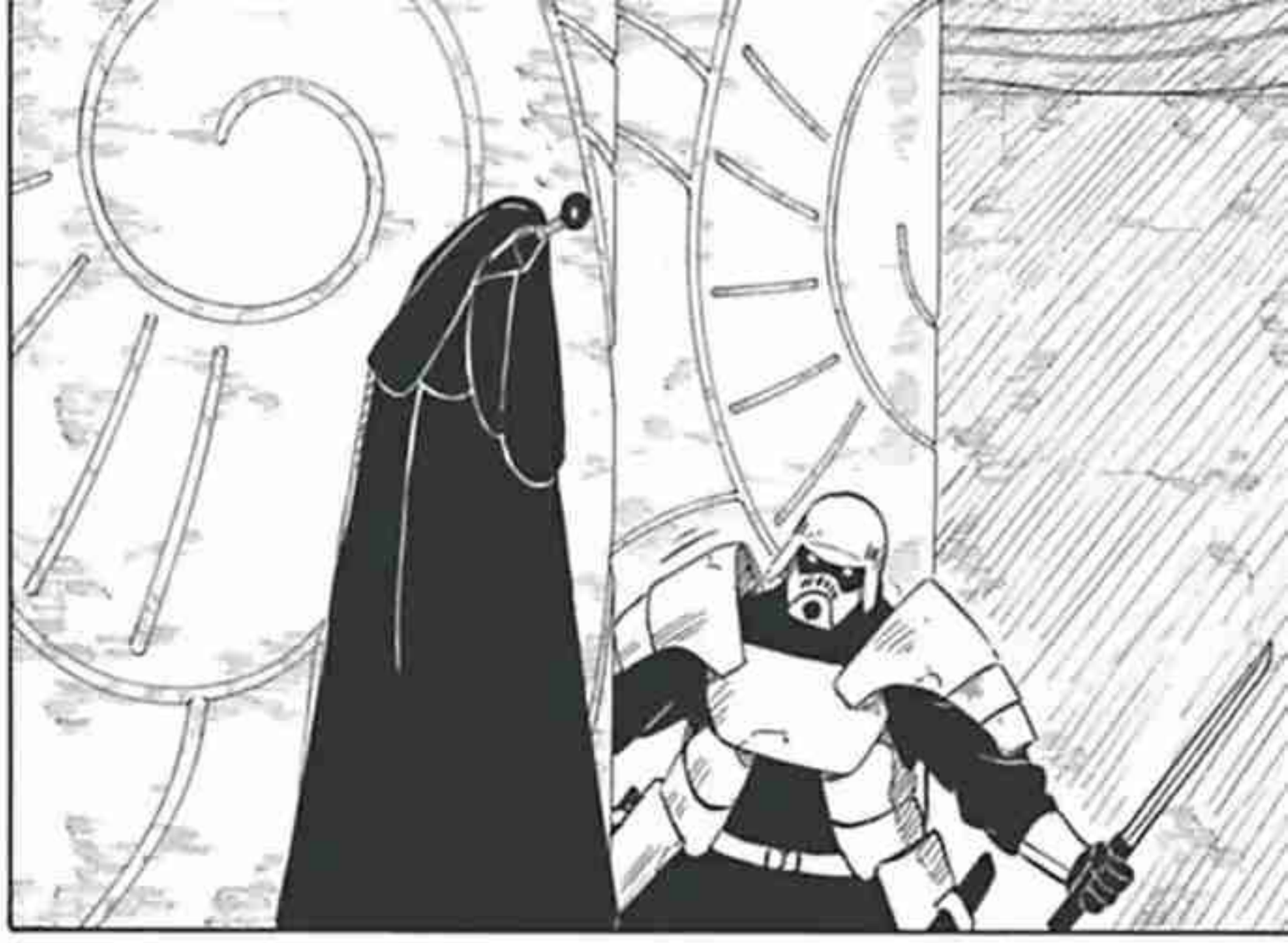
READ THIS WAY
?!
BOOF!
!
ZWOOOO
?!!
SHOULDA FIGURED... IT'S HATAKE SHARIN-GAN KAKASHI.
...YOU SURE ARE QUICK.
SWSH
WHOA!!
G-G-G-G-G-
NARUTO, STAY STILL.

...UCHIHA MADARA!

WE WON'T LET YOU GET YOUR HANDS ON NARUTO THAT EASILY...

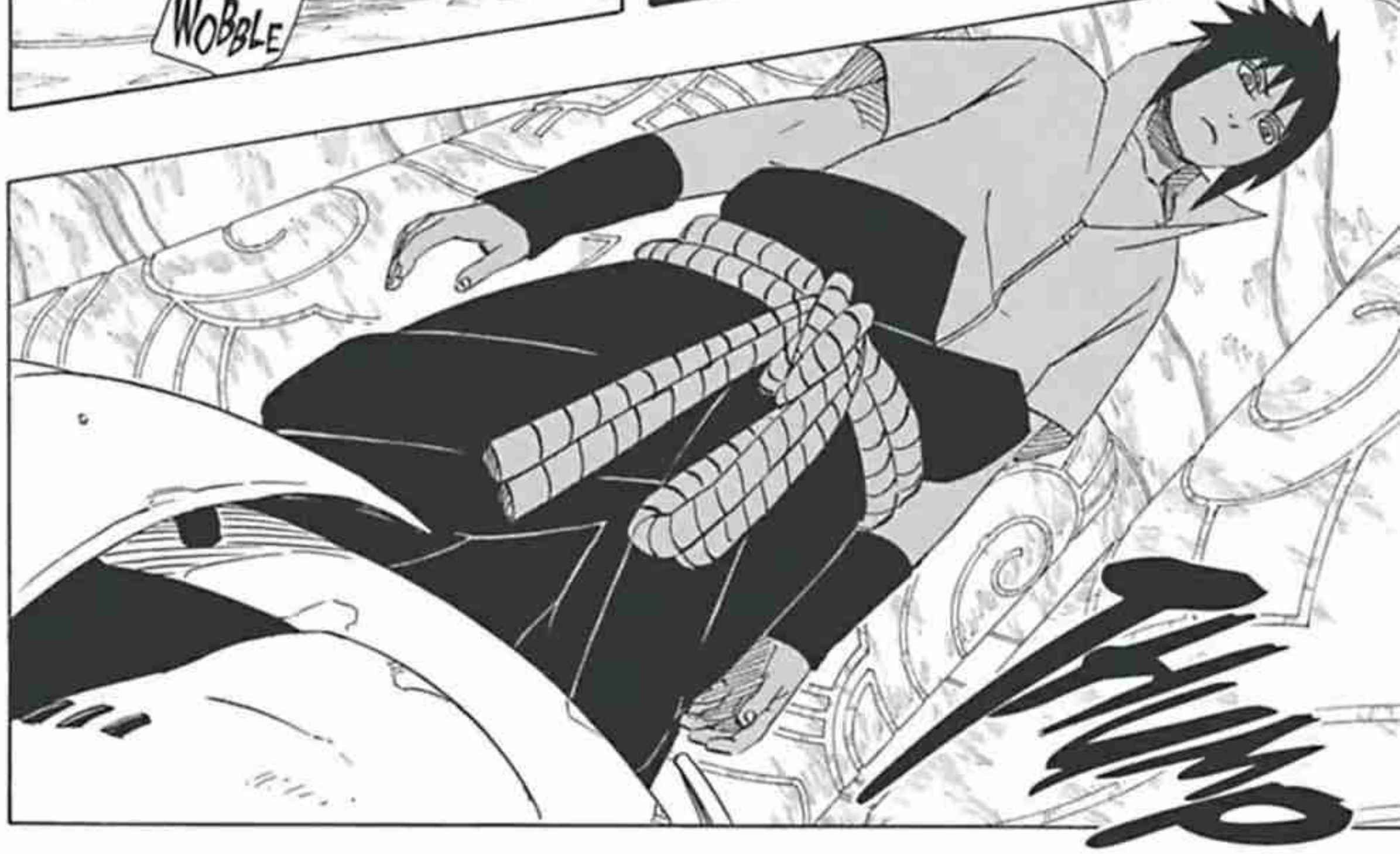
READ THIS WAY
TELL ME ABOUT SASUKE !!
I DON'T CARE ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT!!
WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING TO DO WITH SASUKE?!
NARUTO... YOU'VE SPARKED MY INTEREST.
THAT'S RIGHT. SO WHAT IS THIS THING THAT CAUSED PAIN NAGATO TO BETRAY ME?
ABOUT THE MAN WHO'S BEEN STEEPED TO THE VERY MARROW OF HIS BONES IN THE SHINOBI WORLD'S HATRED AND RESENTMENT.
VERY WELL. I'LL TELL YOU, THEN...
SASUKE, EH...
...
...
THE STORY OF UCHIHA SASUKE!

HE'S ESCAPED ALREADY ...



WOBBLE

?!
SWSH

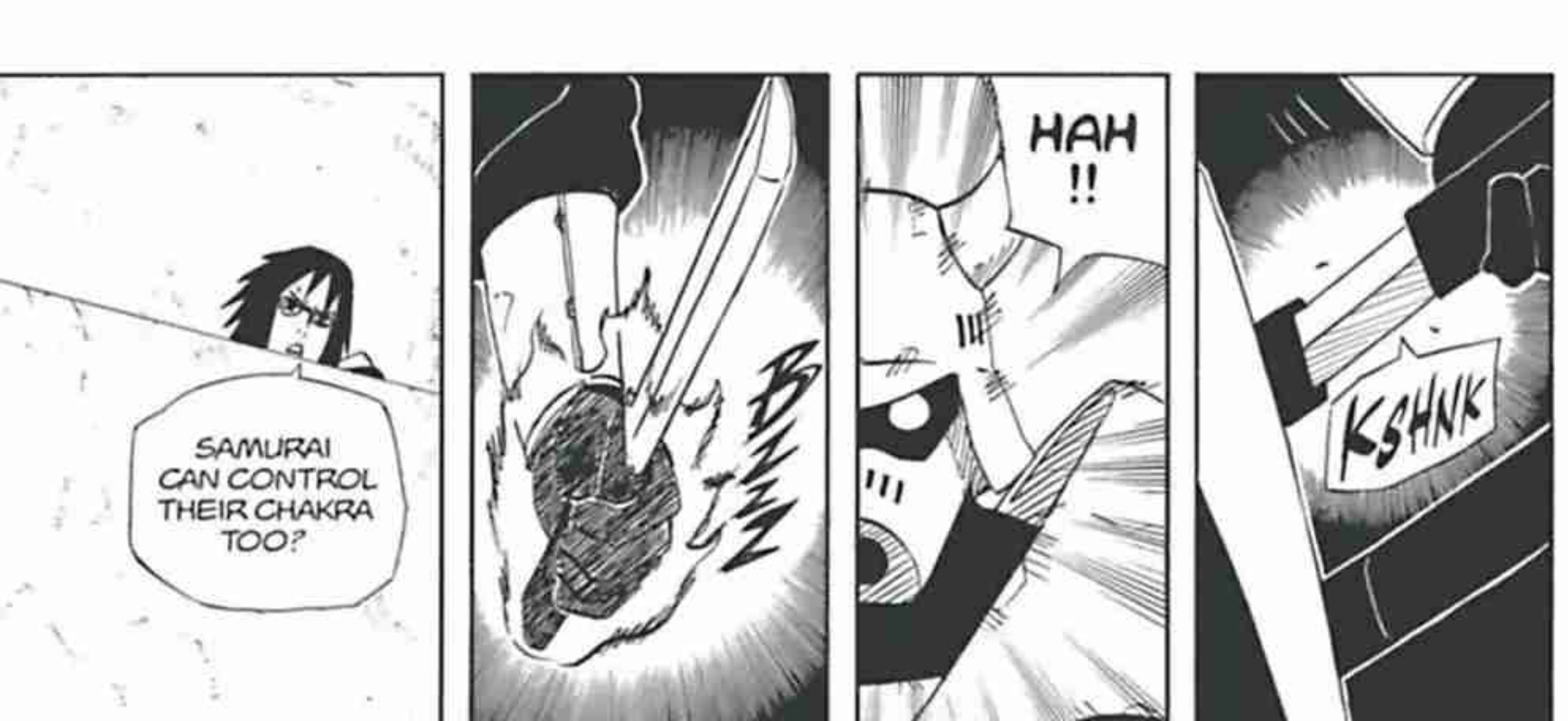


READ
THIS
WAY

KLAKKLAKKLAK

WE'RE GOING TO BE FOUND AND CAPTURED IN NO TIME.
IT'S NO USE... THERE ARE TOO MANY OF THEM!
ZETSU BETTER WATCH HIS BACK!

CHU


SAMURAI CAN CONTROL THEIR CHAKRA TOO?
HAH !!
KSHNK

SINSH

IF YOU COME AT ME, I DON'T THINK I CAN HOLD BACK...
I'M RATHER IRRITATED RIGHT NOW.
SHF

OH! SASUKE!
SO THAT'S HOW THEY USE CHAKRA...
WHY ARE YOU REVEALING YOURSELF ?!

WE COULD SAY THE SAME!!

KI-THD-THD

THD-THD-THD

HEY... AFTER ALL HIS WARNINGS TO ME NOT TO KILL ANYONE!
CHATTER CHATTER
THIS IS...
!!

...AND COLDER...
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S THICKER THAN WHEN HE'S IN THE CURSE MARK SECOND STATE...

HE'S NOT THE SAME SASUKE AS BEFORE...
SASUKE'S CHAKRA... IT'S CHANGED ...

LORD RAIKAGE, YOU'RE NOT...?!
!

HE'S SERIOUS !
RIGHT BELOW US!

WHERE ?!
THERE'S ONE CHAKRA THAT IS ERASING MANY OTHER CHAKRAS!
I BELIEVE IT'S SASUKE'S CHAKRA!
SHOOM SHOOM

!!
SOME-THING HUGE IS COMING!

HE HAD COMPAN-IONS?

KLATTER KLATTER
...
VOO
SH
BLA
M
TAK
!!
KID! I'M GONNA TEACH YOU THE FEAR OF TRUE FURY!!

Number 461: Kumogakure vs. Taka!!

WATER STYLE! WATER WALL!!

Number 461: Kumogakure vs. Taka!!

BZZZ...

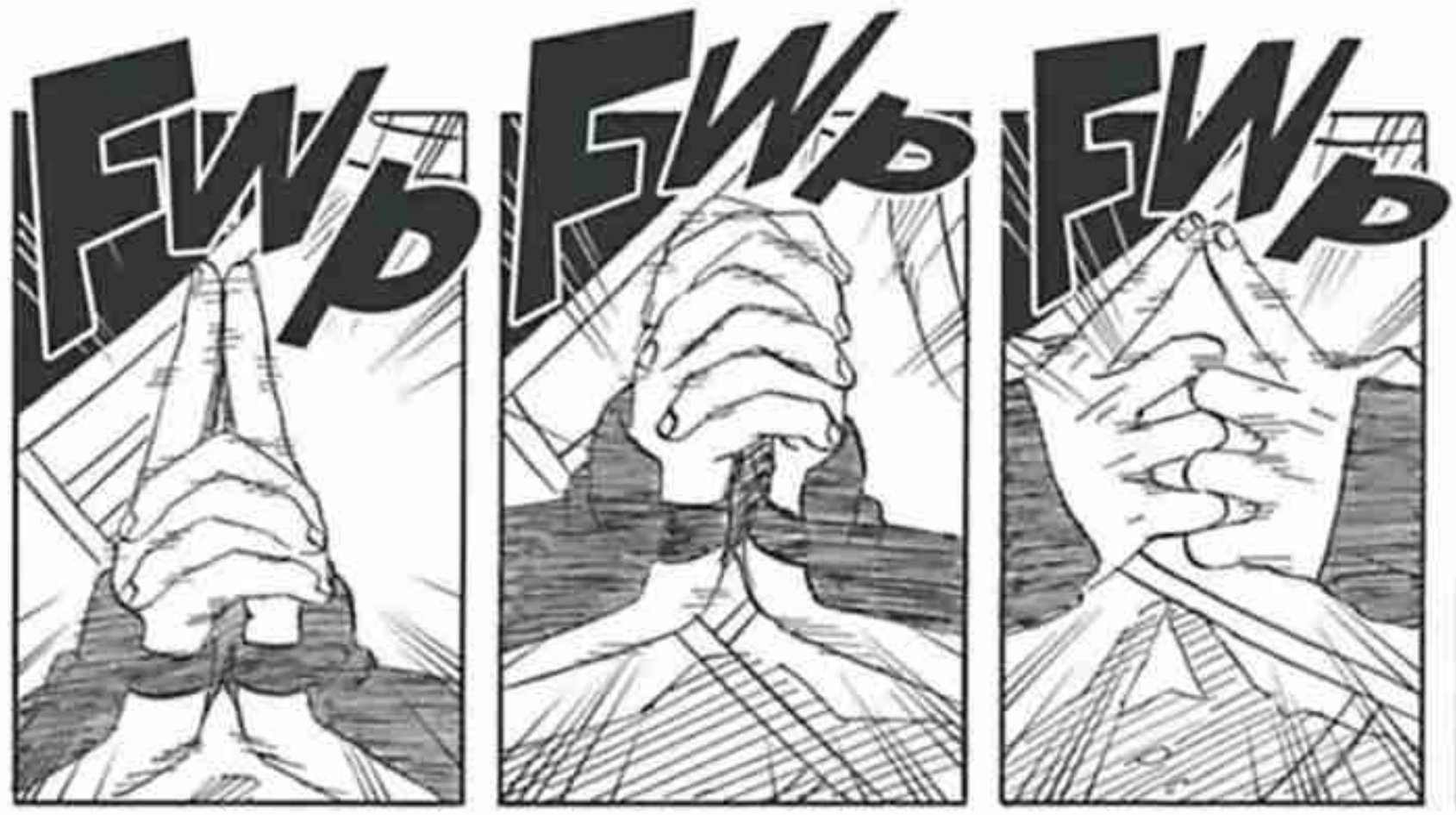
BZZZ
SKREECH...

...DARUI, KEEP WATER JUTSU READY AT ALL TIMES.
HE ALSO POSSESSES FIRE NATURE. HE'S BOUND TO USE FIRE JUTSU AT SOME POINT.
BZZZ
BOSS... JUST AS THE INTEL REPORTED, HE DEFINITELY HAS LIGHTNING NATURE.
FSH
YEAH...

SASUKE'S DONE US IN.
SEEKING REINFORCEMENTS.

AND THE GIANT IN THE MIDDLE IS THE RAIKAGE.
THESE GUYS ARE KUMOGAKURE JÔNIN...
THEY WON'T LET US PASS EASILY.

HEY... THERE... THAT CENTER FELLOW... ISN'T THAT...?!
DOESN'T IT SEEM LIKE THEY KNOW WAY TOO MUCH ABOUT SASUKE?


FWP
FWP
FWP

YSH

HERE COMES SOME-THING!

I'LL STOP HIM!

LIGHTNING ILLUSION !! FLASH PILLAR !!!
FWP

READ THIS WAY
!
HE'S TRYING TO BLIND US?!
SASUKE ...!
KRAK SNAP

SHOULD'VE FIGURED, SHARINGAN.

JUGO, DON'T SWEAT IT. IT'S A GENJUTSU.

YOU MAY HAVE SEEN THROUGH THE GENJUTSU, BUT YOU'RE STILL TOO LATE!!

!

!!

SASUKE !!

SPLICH
SPLICH
WHAT MON-STROUS POWER!
UGH !!
GG...
GG...
SNAP

SKREECH

IF I WEREN'T MADE OF WATER, BOTH OF MY ARMS WOULD BE WRENCHED OFF, YOU KNOW!

SKCH

I DON'T WANT TO WORRY ABOUT MORE POPPING IN.
SHEE... CHECK AND SEE IF THEY'VE GOT ANY OTHER ALLIES AROUND.

SHINOBI SURE FIGHT ROUGH... UNBELIEV-ABLE!

GOTTA KEEP MY CHAKRA LOW FOR NOW.
IF I KEEP AFTER DANZO THAT SHEE GUY'S GONNA SUSS ME OUT!
FSH

BOSS AND I ARE ENOUGH.
WE DON'T NEED YOU.

...BUT IF I HAVE TO FOCUS ON THAT, IT'LL BE HARDER FOR ME TO PARTICIPATE IN THE BATTLE.
I'M PRETTY SURE THERE WAS ONE MORE...

I'LL DO IT.
ZWOOOO...

KARIN WAS HUNTING OUT DANZO...
...BUT THAT'S A NO GO NOW.
SO THAT GUY IN THE BACK IS A SENSOR-TYPE SHINOBI, HUH... WE GOTTA TAKE HIM DOWN...
I BET SHE'S GOING TO ERASE HER CHAKRA... SINCE SHE'S GOT THAT ABILITY.

THE JUTSU IS UNDONE.

NO... RIGHT NOW, EVEN HIS KEIRAKUKEI CHAKRA NETWORK IS QUIET.

LORD AO... WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO CONFIRM WHETHER THE HOKAGE'S OCULAR JUTSU IS STILL ENGAGED OR NOT, PLEASE.

IF A KONOHA HYUGA TURNED TRAITOR, I WOULD HAVE HIM OR HER TAKEN CARE OF AT ONCE.

I CANNOT BELIEVE THAT THE BYAKUGAN FELL INTO OTHERS' HANDS...

FOR YOU ARE A MAN WHO CANNOT BE TRUSTED.

I'LL DECIDE THAT.

IT'S NOT A JUTSU I CAN USE THAT MANY TIMES IN A DAY.

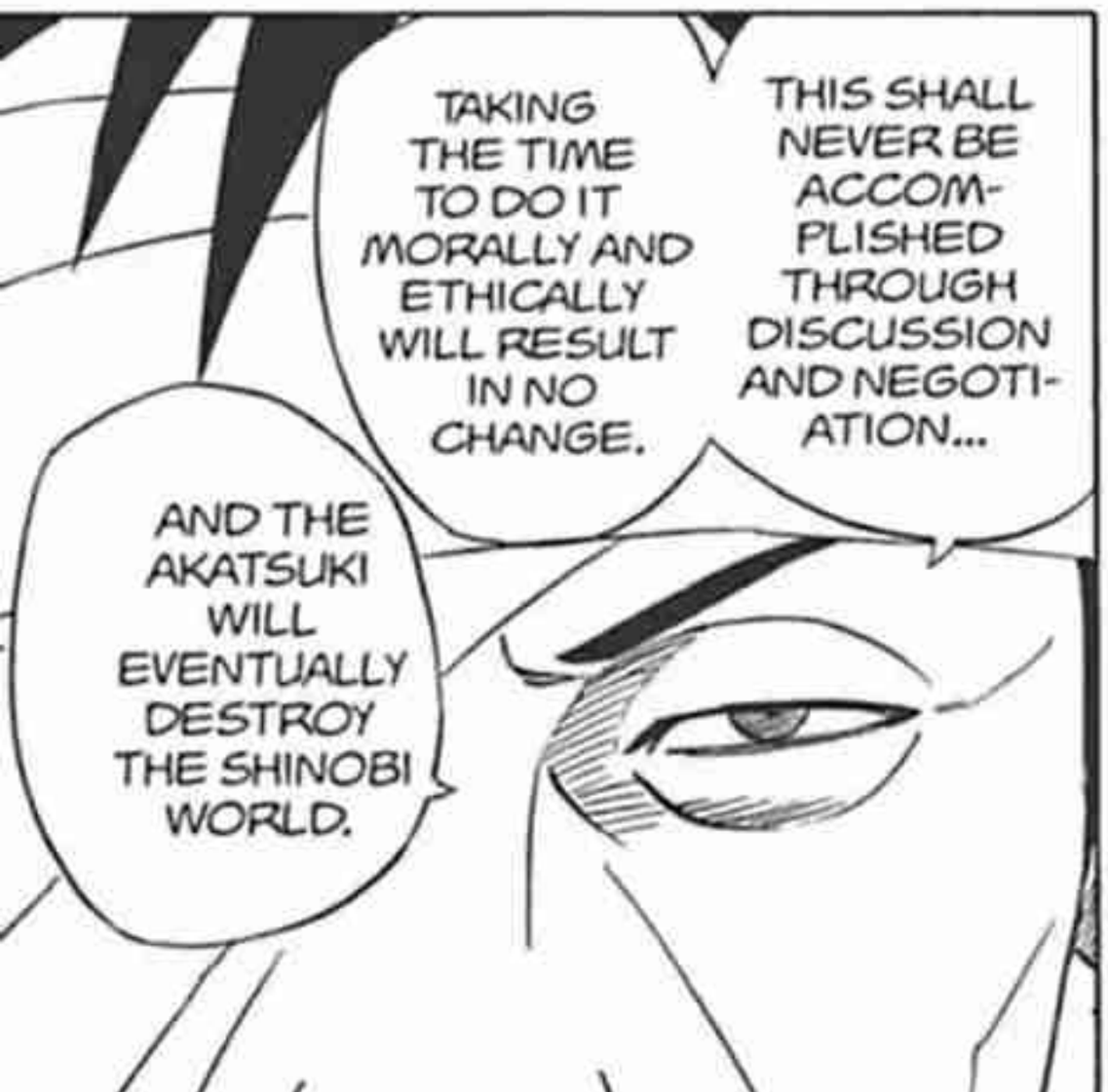
RELAX.

ESPECIALLY SINCE THERE MAY BE SOME CONNECTION BETWEEN...
...YOUR OCULAR POWER AND THE JUTSU USED TO MANIPULATE THE FOURTH MIZUKAGE.
I'LL FIGHT YOU MYSELF, IF IT COMES TO THAT.

...BUT THAT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN.
I SUPPOSE YOU'RE PLANNING MY DISPOSAL NOW, SINCE I KNOW YOUR SECRET...

I SHALL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO PROTECT THE SHINOBI WORLD.
BUT "MAY HAVE" IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH.

YOU HAVE LOST TRUST... A SHAME, SINCE I MAY HAVE STILL CHOSEN YOU WITHOUT YOUR RESORTING TO SUCH TACTICS...
LORD HOKAGE, NINJUTSU IS PROHIBITED IN THIS ROOM.


TAKING THE TIME TO DO IT MORALLY AND ETHICALLY WILL RESULT IN NO CHANGE.
THIS SHALL NEVER BE ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH DISCUSSION AND NEGOTIATION...
AND THE AKATSUKI WILL EVENTUALLY DESTROY THE SHINOBI WORLD.

JUST AS THE FIRST HOKAGE HASHIRAMA ONCE BROUGHT TOGETHER HIS CLAN AND CREATED KONOHA...
...NOW WE MUST MERGE ALL THE VILLAGES AND CREATE ONE SHINOBI WORLD.
OUR WORLD MUST UNITE.

LOOK, DANZO... RIGHT NOW, WE CANNOT EVEN TRUST WHAT YOU SAY.

EVEN IF YOU THINK IT'S ALL RIGHT, IN THE END YOU'LL JUST BREED DISTRUST, ILL FEELINGS AND HATRED.

IF YOU RUSH THINGS, MISTAKES WILL HAPPEN BECAUSE YOU CAN'T SEE AROUND YOU... THAT'S YOU RIGHT NOW.

BUT IT TAKES TIME TO ACTUALIZE AN IDEAL.

BESIDES WHICH, SUCH AN IDEAL IS AN IMPOSSIBLE DREAM ANYWAY!

IF WE STOP TRYING TO UNDER-STAND AND TRUST EACH OTHER...

...ALL THAT WILL REMAIN IS FEAR AND TERROR.

IF THAT'S THE STATE OF THE WORLD... AND OF HUMANITY, WE HAVE NO FUTURE.

...RESULTS ARE NECESSARY.

WHETHER YOU TRUST ME OR NOT...

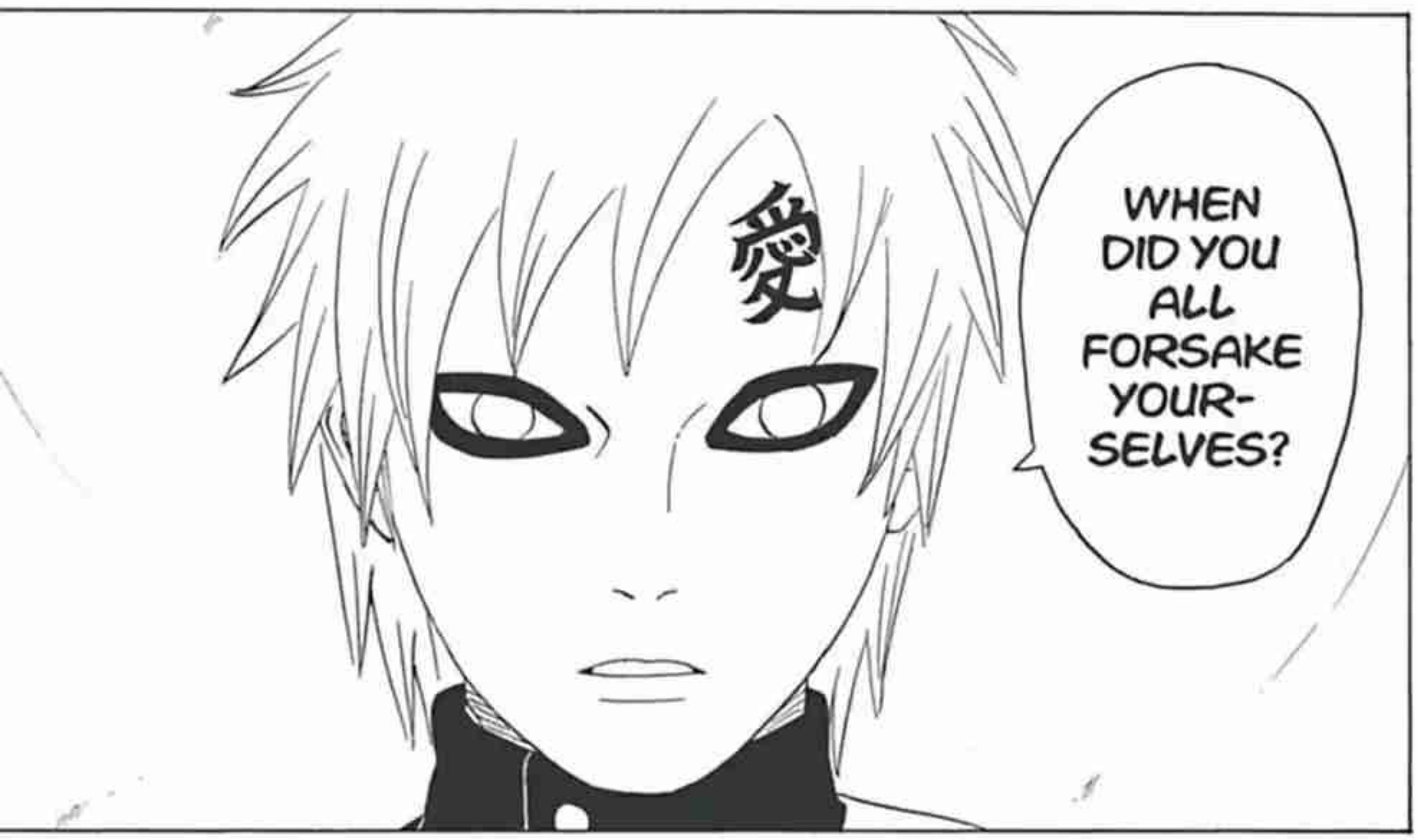
BUT YOU'RE JUST A GREEN BRAT WHO STILL KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT RUNNING A VILLAGE...

YOU POSE SUCH DIFFICULT CONCEPTS SO SIMPLY...

STRATEGY THAT DOES NOT INCORPORATE MORALITY, AND GIVING UP, ARE THINGS THAT I NO LONGER ACCEPT EASILY.

SURE! GO AHEAD, NO HOLDS BARRED... KID.
...THEN LET ME ASK YOU THIS.

SAY AGAIN, OLD MAN?!!
AS YOUR SENIOR, I'M WILLING TO ANSWER ANY QUESTION YOU HAVE... EH, DANZO...? HEH HEH HEH.
SO NOW'S YOUR CHANCE TO ASK ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE.
DON'T, KANKURO! HE'S STILL TSUCHIKAGE... THE LEADER OF ANOTHER VILLAGE!


愛
WHEN DID YOU ALL FORSAKE YOUR-SELVES?

WHAT A PURE-HEARTED CHILD...

...
!!

UCHIHA ... SASUKE, HUH.
...

HEH!
WE COOPERATED WITH KONOHA ON THEIR SASUKE RETRIEVAL OPERATION, BUT HE'S NOW DESCENDED TO JOINING THE AKATSUKI.
NOW, GAARA, WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

LORD TSUCHI-KAGE... WHAT ABOUT US?
SHALL WE GO FORTH TO BATTLE?
SHUT IT!
OLD MAN, HE'S SCORED A POINT ON YOU.

JUST REMEMBER, IF YOU GET CAUGHT IN THE RAIKAGE'S CROSSFIRE, YOU'LL DIE... SO STAY OUT OF THE WAY.
FINE, DO AS YOU PLEASE!

BUT I WANNA SEE THIS SASUKE WHO SUPPOSEDLY TOOK DOWN DEIDARA!
FOOL! WHAT IF MY BACK PAIN WERE TO GET AGGRAVATED ?!

FSH...
LORD DANZO, PLEASE ALLOW ONE OF US TO GO FORTH IN ORDER TO COLLECT THE SHARINGAN.

WHAT ABOUT YOU, AKATSUCHI ?!
ALL RIGHT!
I'VE GOT TO KEEP AN EYE ON LORD TSUCHIKAGE'S BACK, SO I'LL STAY WITH HIM.

TMP
FOO, TORUNÉ, DESIST... WE'LL PLAY NICE FOR NOW.

AS LORD RAIKAGE ENTRUSTED ME!
ALL OF YOU FROM KONOHA WILL STAY RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE!

VOOSH
VOOSH
WAO

THOOM
KRAK

FOCUS! HE'S GOT UNBELIEV-ABLE CHAKRA!!

HIS PERSONALITY CHANGE IS MORE IMPRESSIVE THAN THE VISUAL ONE... DON'T YOU THINK?

AH-HA !!!!

I HOPE HE STILL REMEMBERS WE'RE ON HIS SIDE...

HEY, JUGO ACTUALLY VOLUNTARILY GAVE IN TO HIS KILLER IMPULSE THIS TIME.

KRIK KRIK

HUMPH.

YOU NEED TO LEARN YOUR PLACE!!

POOOOF

GWA-HA HA HA HA HA! I'M GONNA SLAUGHTER YA!!

NARUTO

Number 462:
HE'S FAST !!
Sasuke's Shinobi Way...!!
BZZZZ
RRRRR
!
WHIK
MRP MRP

GOTCHA !!
SLASH
!!
!!
KLANG
GUK
TAK
I AIN'T GIVIN' YOU MINE JUST CUZ YOURS BROKE.
NICE BLADE YOU GOT THERE ...

ZZZOOOOO
ONE DOWN...
GRRRRR

PLUS, THERE'S STILL...
BUT LORD RAIKAGE HAS MANIPULATED RAITON CHAKRA TO AUGMENT HIS REFLEXES! NOT EVEN THE SHARINGAN WILL BE ABLE TO KEEP UP WITH HIM.
LORD RAIKAGE'S NERVE TRANSMISSION AND HIS REACTION SPEED ARE ON PAR WITH THAT OF KONOHA'S YELLOW FLASH... IMPRESSIVE THAT THESE FOLK ARE KEEPING UP AS WELL AS THEY ARE!
I AM NO WEAKLING! I CAN'T BE TAKEN DOWN BY MERE SHARINGAN!

SSH
!
SSH
RRRR
MWA-HA HA... DIE !!
WHEEN
?!
ZERO RANGE!
!

BOOM

UGH ...!

BAM BAM BAM

DID HE GET HIM?!

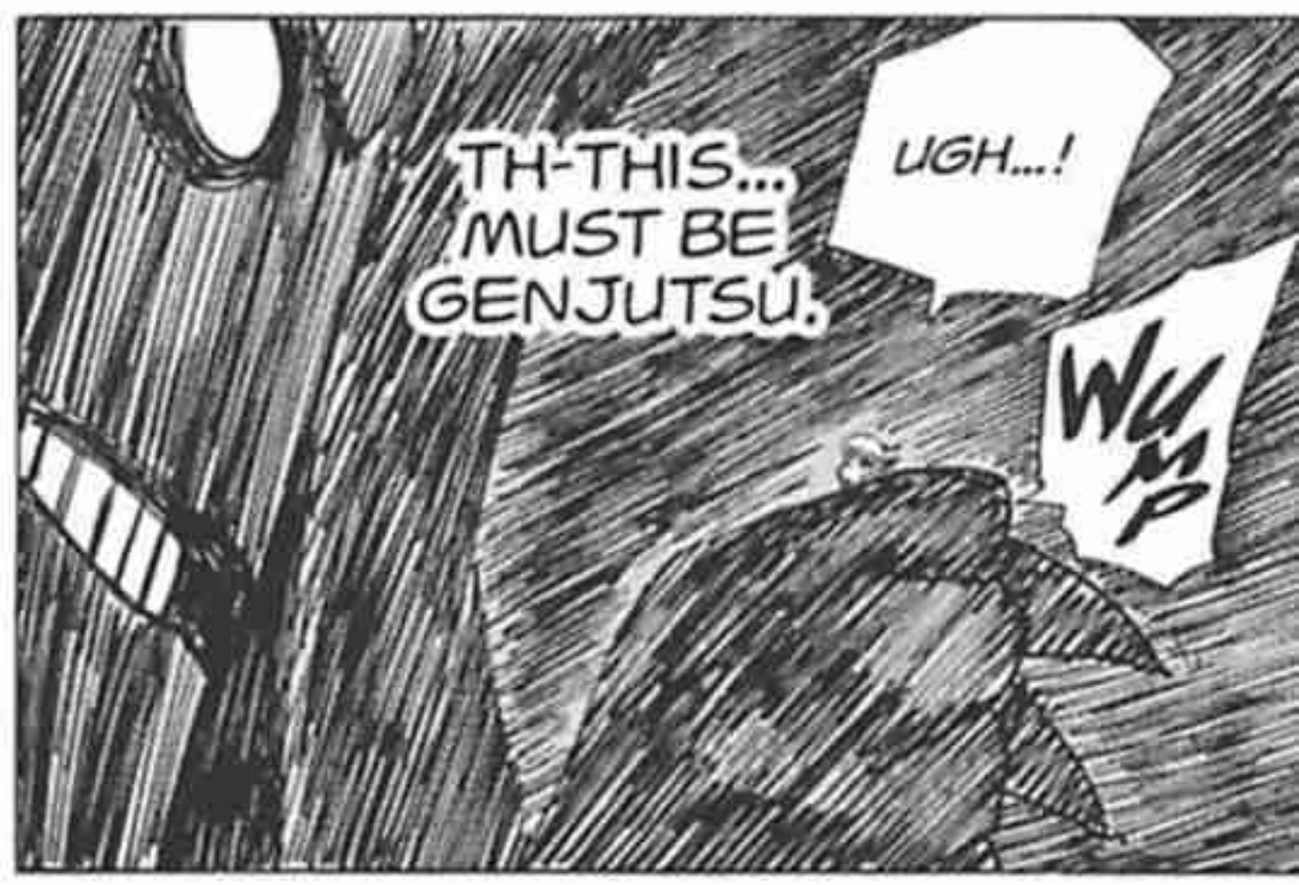
WHAT ?!

LORD RAIKAGE HIT HIM AND HE STILL SURVIVED ?!

?!

?!

I CAN'T BELIEVE I FELL FOR IT...!
THESE GUYS ARE USING EACH OTHER'S ATTACKS TO DIVERT ATTENTION.
ZWOOOOOO...


TH-THIS... MUST BE GENJUTSU.
UGH...!
WUMP

!
?!
THUMP

CAN'T... MOVE...

KLANG

SHEE! WHY ARE YOU LYING DOWN ?!

GET UP!

WHIK

HUH ?!!

!!

ALL RIGHT! I CAN GO LOOKING NOW! SO LET'S SEE WHERE DANZO IS...

JUGO CAN BE USEFUL, AFTER ALL!

WHO'S NEXT ?!!

ZWOOOO

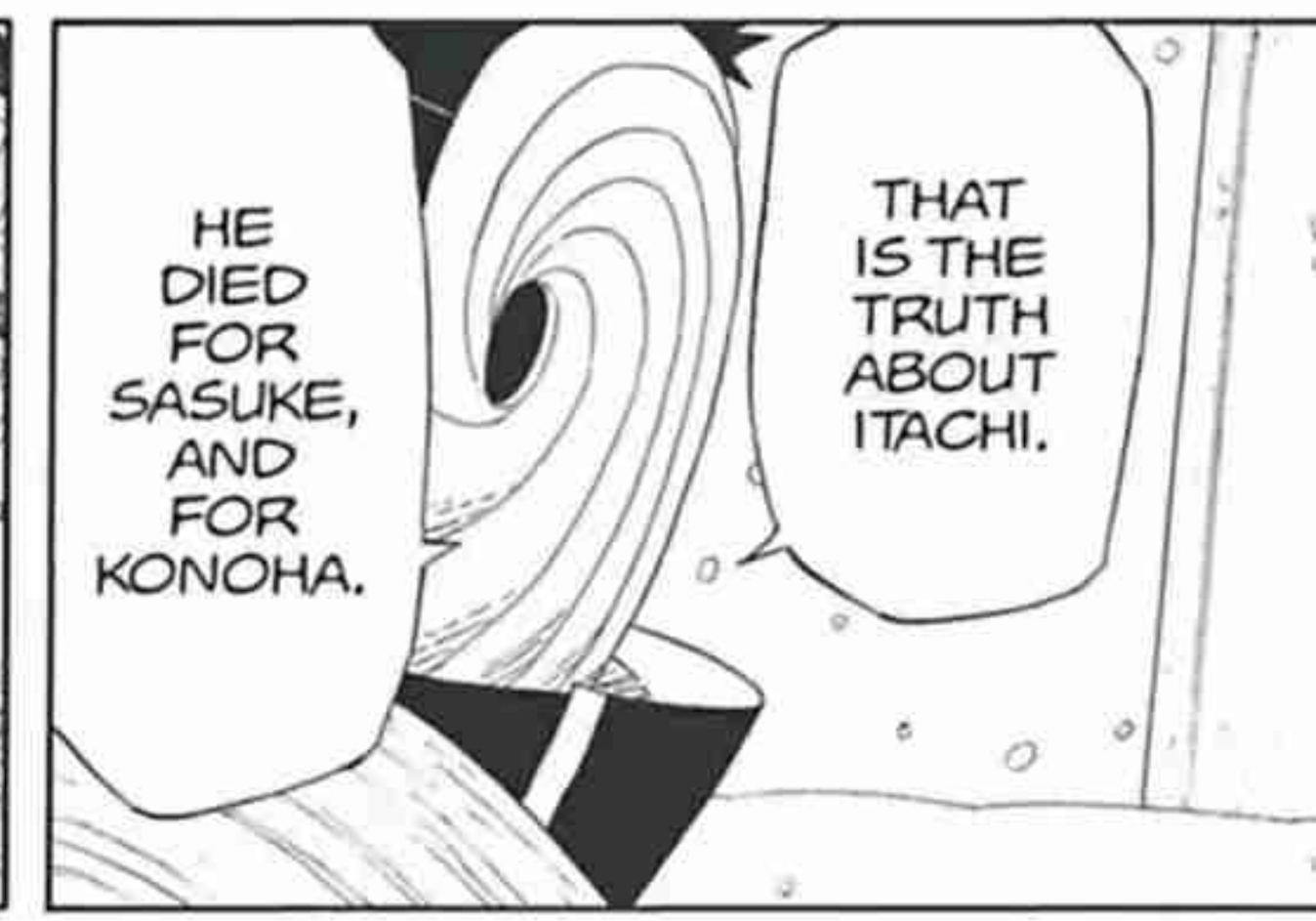
KYA-HA HA HA, KILLED YA! I KILLED HIM!!

?!!

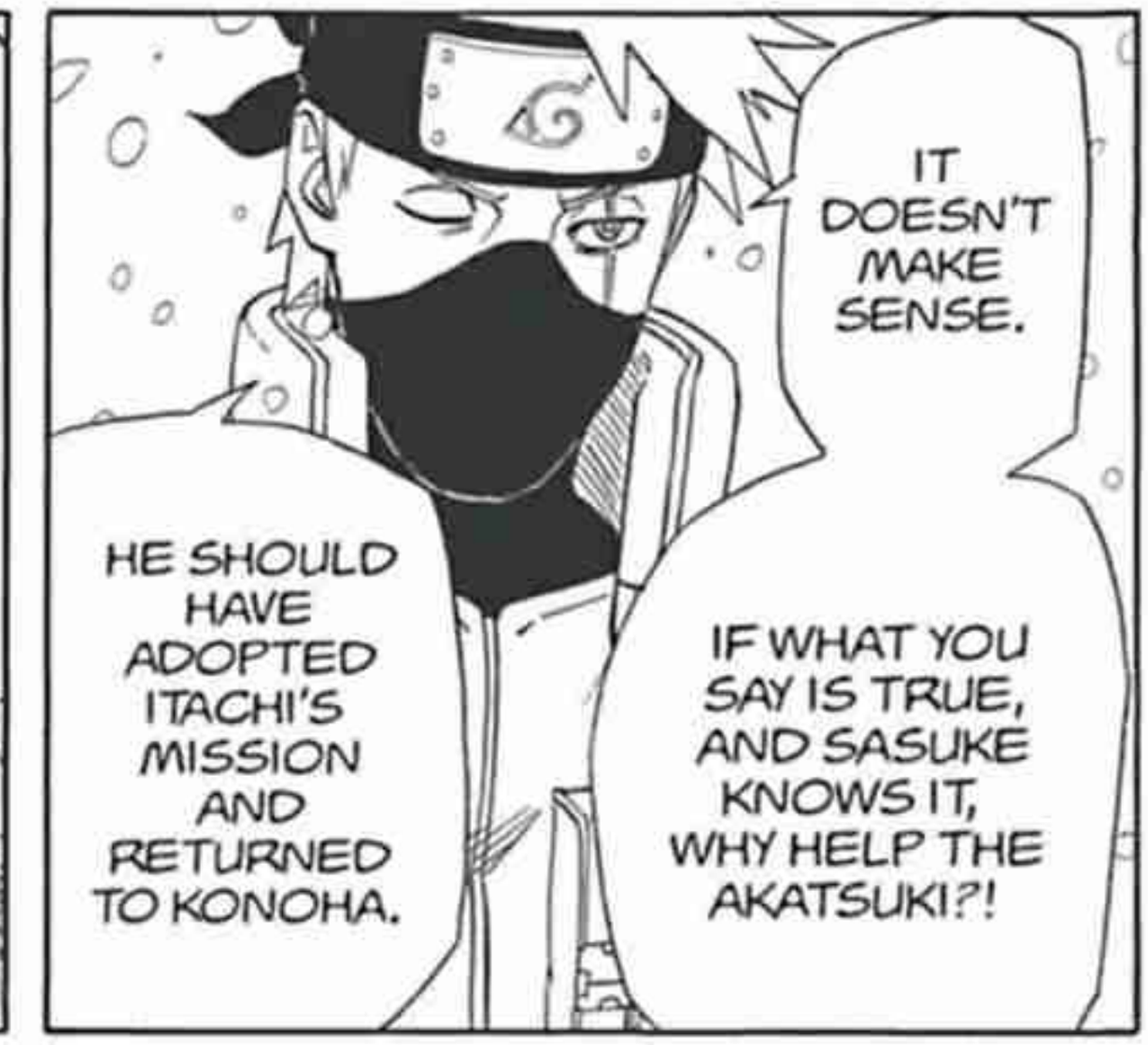
NO... NO WAY...
YOU'RE MAKING THAT UP!!
THAT'S A LIE...!!
SLAM

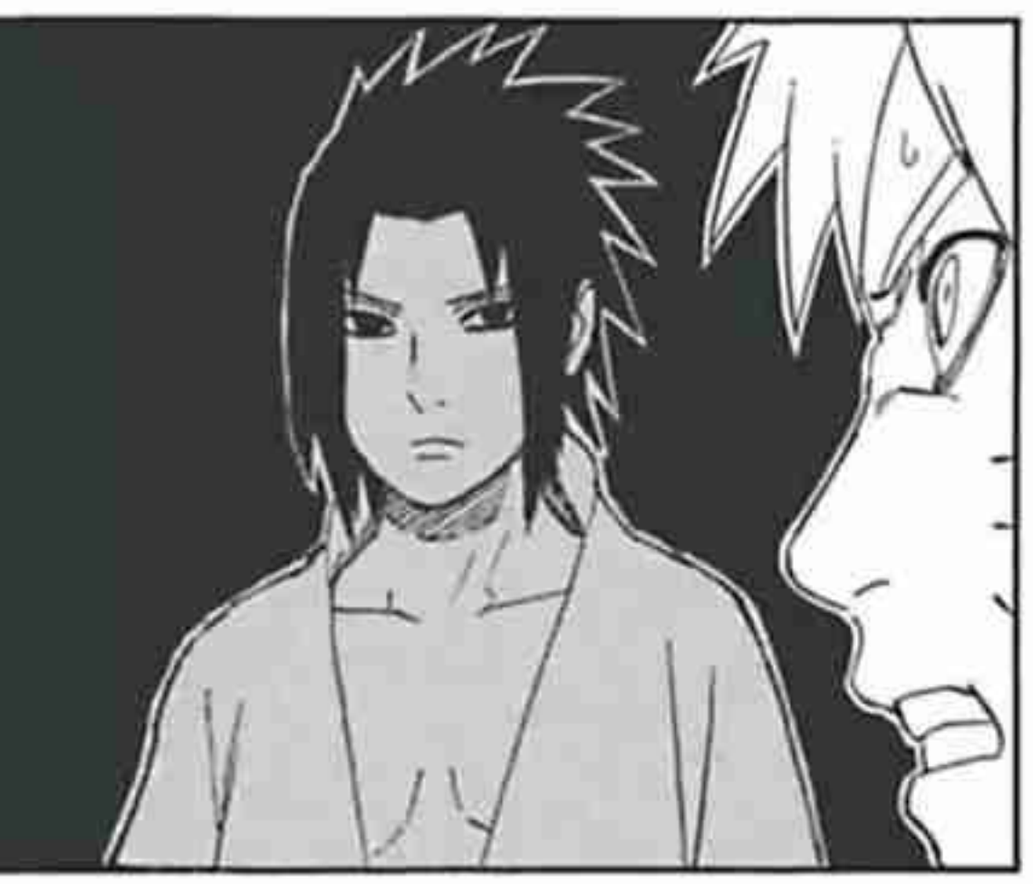
NO MORE TASTELESS JOKING... THAT IS IMPLAUSIBLE.
YOU CANNOT OMIT ITACHI'S TALE WHEN DISCUSSING SASUKE.
NO... IT'S NOT FALSE-HOOD.

CHIRP CHIRP


HE DIED FOR SASUKE, AND FOR KONOHA.
THAT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT ITACHI.

HEH... AS SASUKE'S TEACHER AND AS HIS FRIENDS, YOU ALL ASSUME YOU KNOW HIS TRUE FEELINGS...
BUT YOU COULDN'T BE MORE IN THE DARK.


IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.
HE SHOULD HAVE ADOPTED ITACHI'S MISSION AND RETURNED TO KONOHA.
IF WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE, AND SASUKE KNOWS IT, WHY HELP THE AKATSUKI?!



...A TRUE AVENGER!
HE'S THE REAL THING ...
GRAK

NO... NOT I...

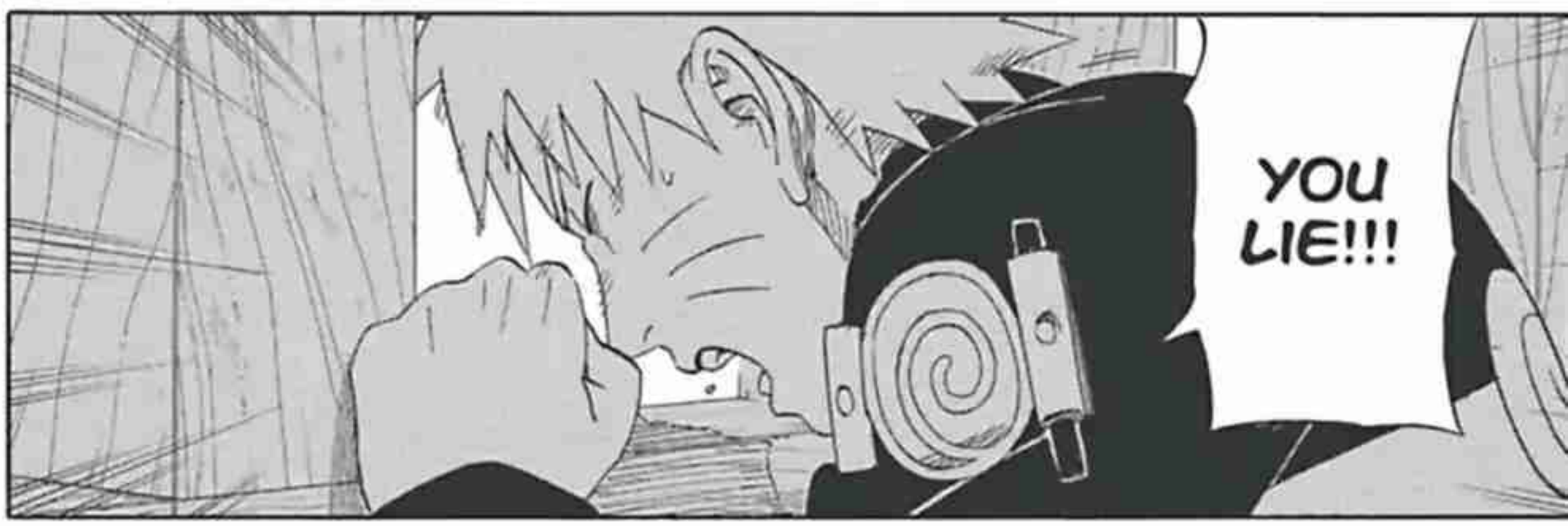
YOU MADE HIM THAT WAY!

...!

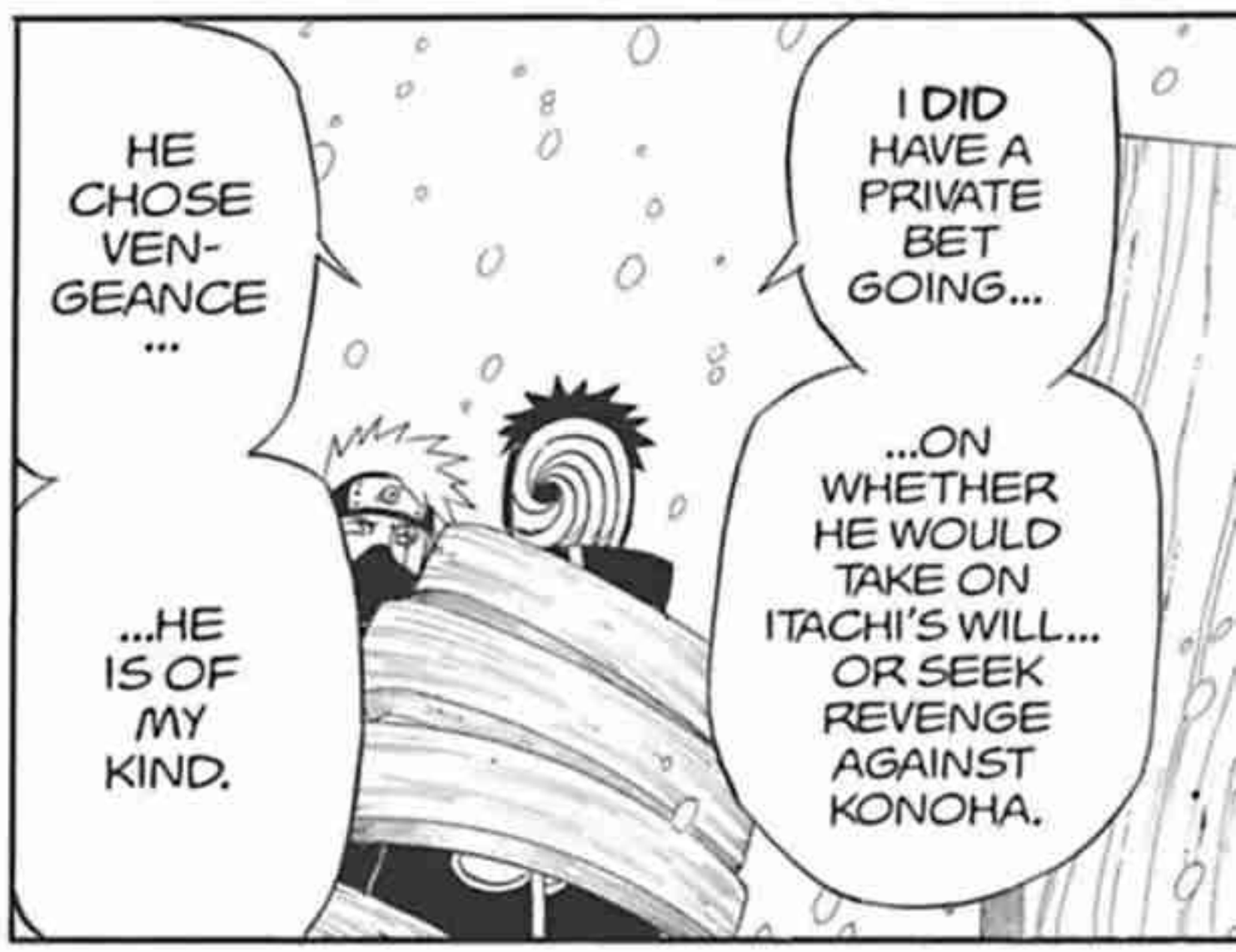
...!

SASUKE CHOSE THIS PATH ON HIS OWN.

...!


YOU LIE!!!

...IS TO WREAK VENGEANCE UPON KONOHA FOR PERSECUTING THE UCHIHA CLAN... PARTICULARLY ITACHI.
SASUKE'S CURRENT OBJECTIVE...

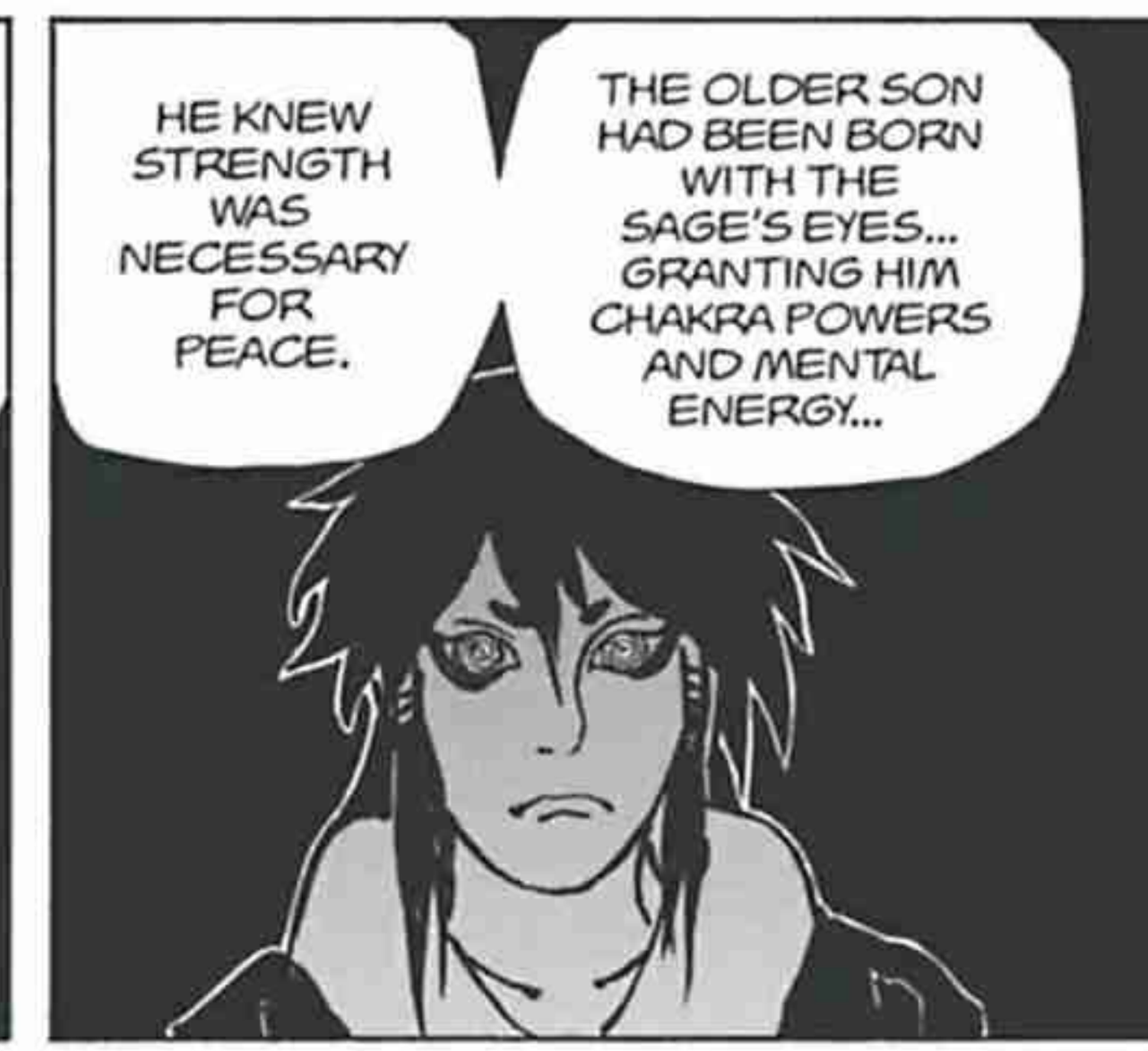

HE CHOSE VEN-GEANCE ...
...HE IS OF MY KIND.
I DID HAVE A PRIVATE BET GOING...
...ON WHETHER HE WOULD TAKE ON ITACHI'S WILL... OR SEEK REVENGE AGAINST KONOHA.

READ THIS WAY
WHY DID HE CHOOSE REVENGE ...?!
HOW DID IT TURN INTO THIS MUCH OF A MESS ...?!!
WHY WOULD HE...
WHY ...?
...
DESTINY OF HATE...?
CURSE ...?!
IT COULDN'T BE HELPED. IT IS THE BLOOD-SOAKED UCHIHA DESTINY OF HATE.
A CURSE THAT'S BEEN REPEATING OVER AND OVER SINCE THE ANCIENT PAST.
THE RINNEGAN, A RANDOM MUTATION ...
SAGE OF SIX PATHS ...?
THAT'S JUST A MYTH!
THAT'S RIGHT...
A CURSE OF HATRED THAT BEGAN WITH THE FATHER OF SHINOBI, THE SAGE OF SIX PATHS.

THE SAGE BEQUEATHED HIS WILL AND TEACHINGS TO HIS TWO CHILDREN.

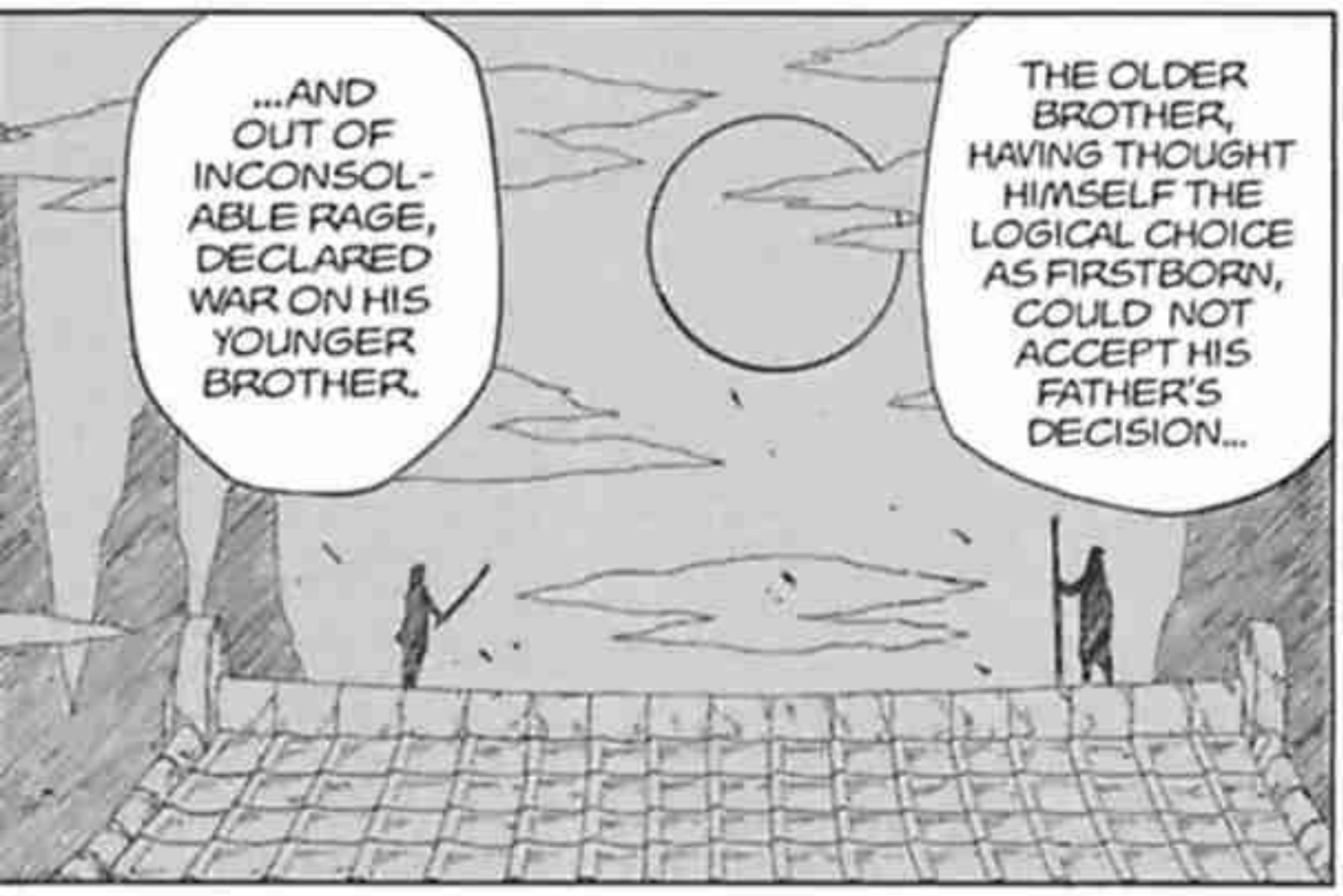
LONG AGO, THE SAGE OF SIX PATHS CLARIFIED SHINOBI CREED AND ATTEMPTED WORLD PEACE...
HIS END CAME BEFORE HE COULD FULFILL HIS DREAM.
MYTHS ARE OFTEN BASED ON TRUTHS...

...AND HE KNEW LOVE WAS NECESSARY FOR PEACE.
THE YOUNGER SON HAD BEEN BORN WITH THE SAGE'S BODY... GRANTED WITH STAMINA AND PHYSICAL ENERGY...

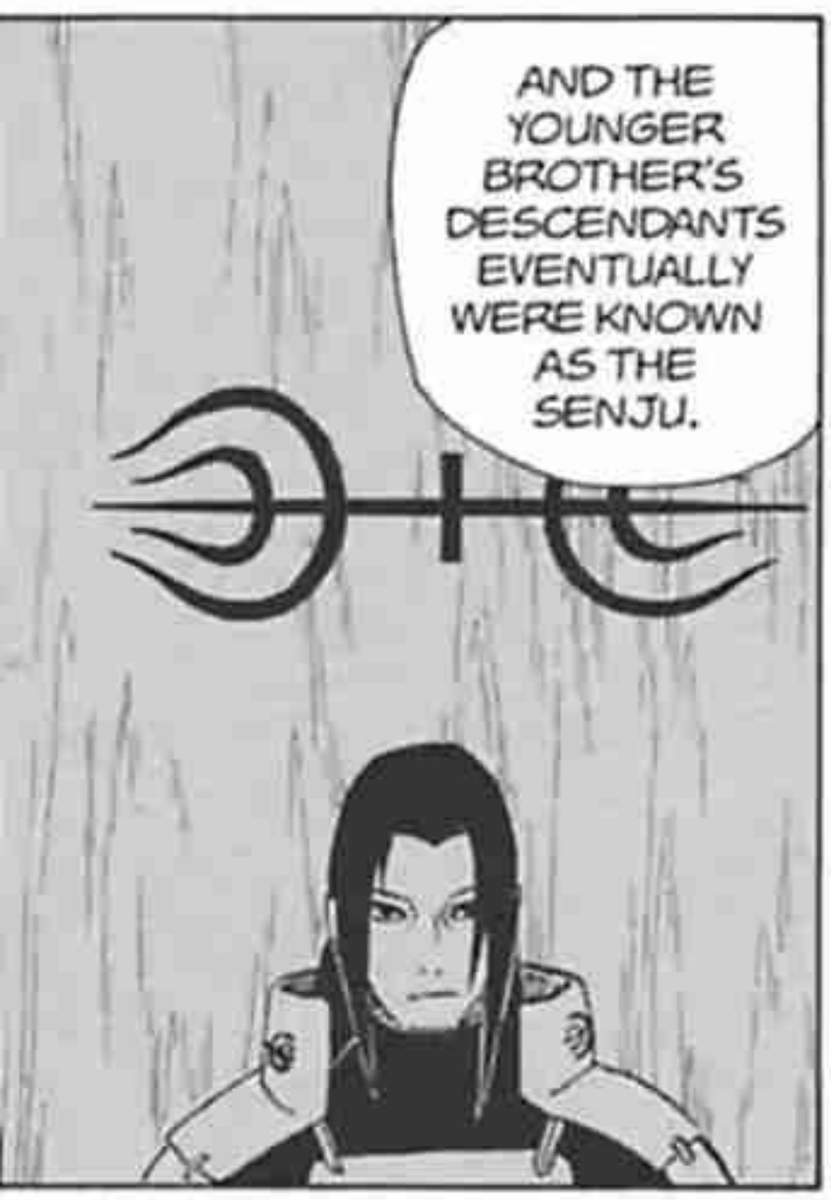

HE KNEW STRENGTH WAS NECESSARY FOR PEACE.
THE OLDER SON HAD BEEN BORN WITH THE SAGE'S EYES... GRANTING HIM CHAKRA POWERS AND MENTAL ENERGY...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

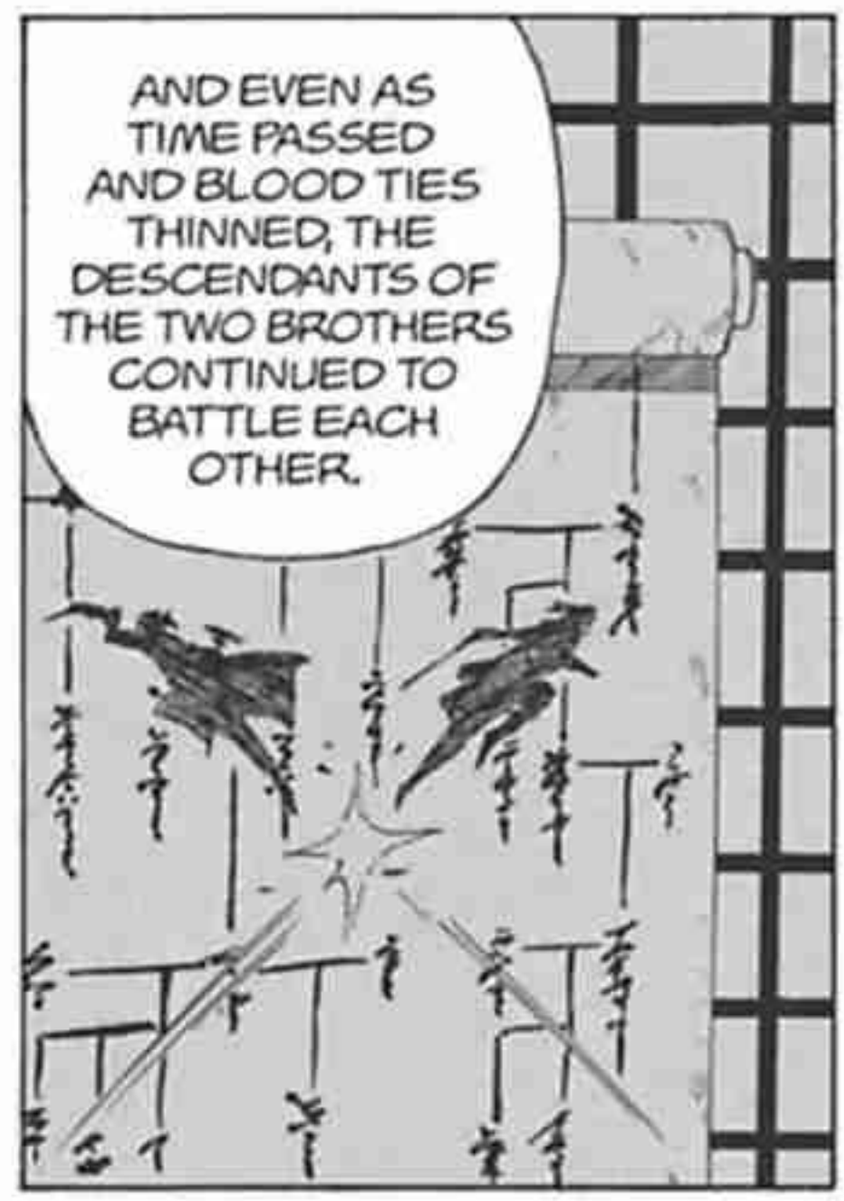
...A DECISION THAT CREATED THE ETERNAL CURSE OF HATRED.
ON HIS DEATHBED, THE SAGE CHOSE A SINGLE SUCCESSOR ...


...AND OUT OF INCONSOLABLE RAGE, DECLARED WAR ON HIS YOUNGER BROTHER.
THE OLDER BROTHER, HAVING THOUGHT HIMSELF THE LOGICAL CHOICE AS FIRSTBORN, COULD NOT ACCEPT HIS FATHER'S DECISION...

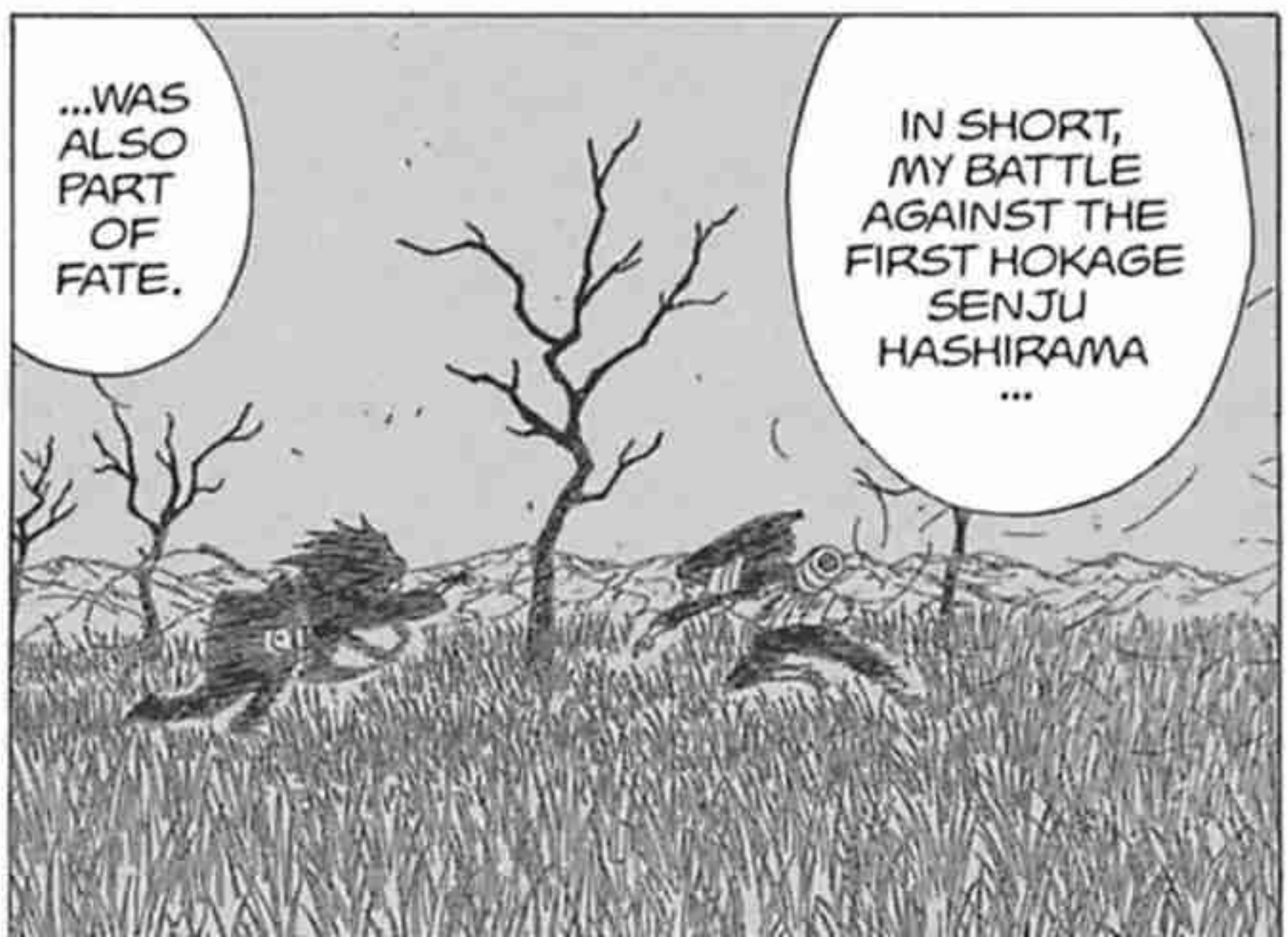
...BUT THE YOUNGER BROTHER, WHO SOUGHT LOVE, AS HIS WORTHY HEIR.
THE SAGE CHOSE NOT THE OLDER BROTHER, WHO SOUGHT STRENGTH ...


AND THE YOUNGER BROTHER'S DESCENDANTS EVENTUALLY WERE KNOWN AS THE SENJU.

THE DESCENDANTS OF THE OLDER BROTHER EVENTUALLY CAME TO BE KNOWN AS THE UCHIHA.


AND EVEN AS TIME PASSED AND BLOOD TIES THINNED, THE DESCENDANTS OF THE TWO BROTHERS CONTINUED TO BATTLE EACH OTHER.

...


...WAS ALSO PART OF FATE.
IN SHORT, MY BATTLE AGAINST THE FIRST HOKAGE SENJU HASHIRAMA ...

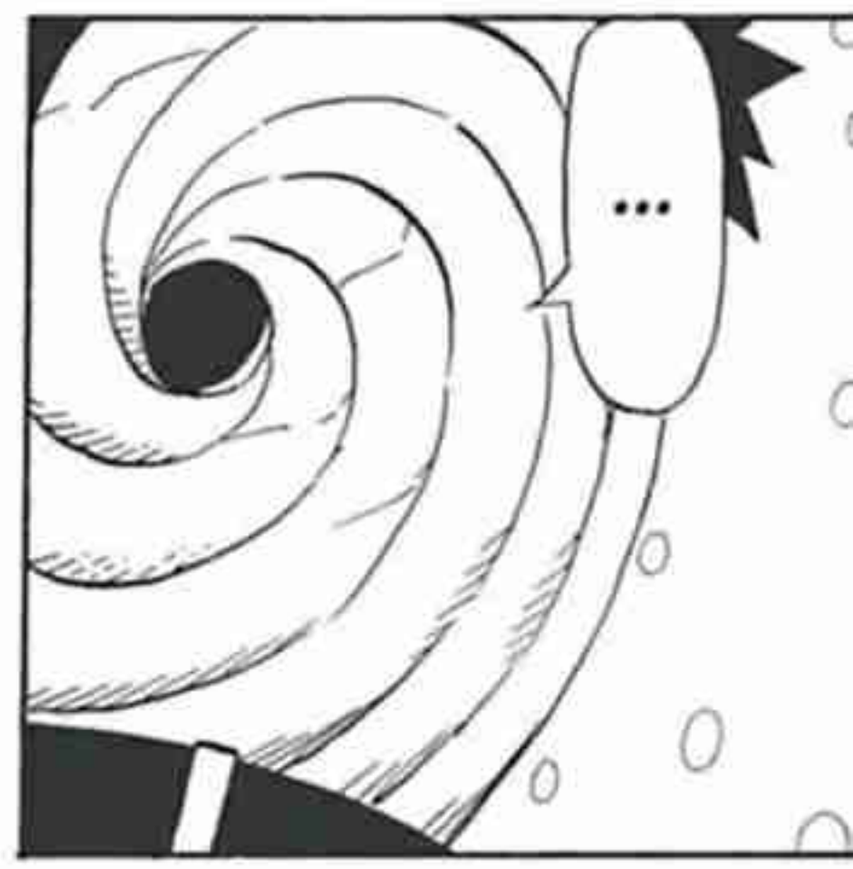
I CAN SEE THE FIRST HOKAGE'S IMAGE IN YOUR VISAGE.
HE WHOM I SO ADMIRED... YET WAS MY RIVAL...
EVEN IN DEATH, HE LIVES ON.

...BUT I CAN TELL THAT YOU HOLD SENJU'S WILL OF FIRE WITHIN YOU.

THIS MAY BE ONLY OUR SECOND MEETING ...

...AND THE MAN I MOST HATED IN THE WORLD.

SENJU AND UCHIHA ...
...THE WILL OF FIRE AND HATRED ...
... NARUTO AND SASUKE ...


...

READ THIS WAY
PLINK
PLINK
SLOSH
YOU ARE JUST THE NEXT IN LINE TO BE CHOSEN BY DESTINY.

...AND THE TRUE SOURCE OF HIS POWER.
THE HATE THAT IS HIS STRONGEST WEAPON... HIS FRIEND...

CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP

SASUKE HAS SHOULDERED THE ENTIRE BURDEN OF UCHIHA HATRED...
...AND PLANS TO RAM THAT CURSE OF HATRED DEEP INTO THE WORLD.

KA

FWP
FWP
KAK
THE UCHIHA CLAN IS CURSED WITH A DESTINY OF VEN-GEANCE.

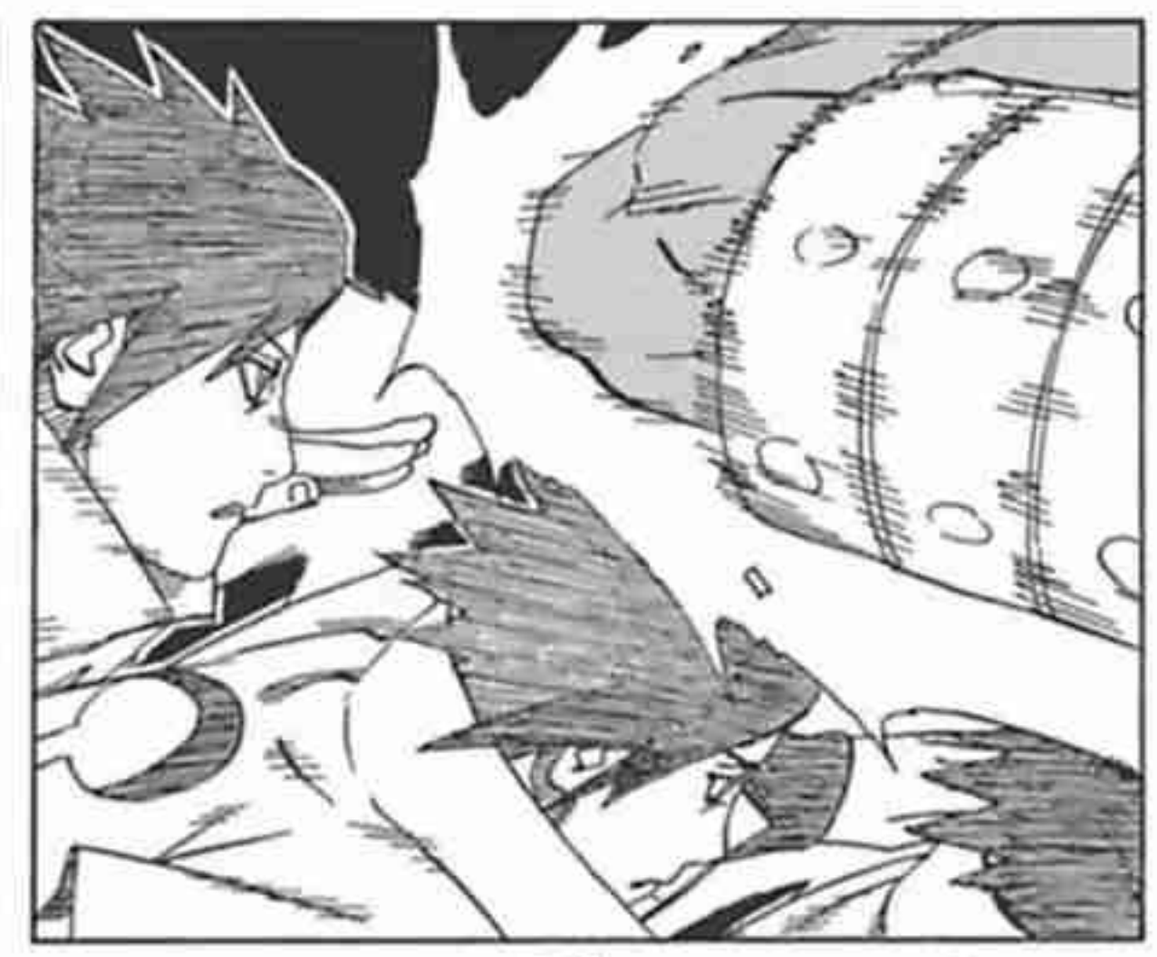
SHING

THAT IS SASUKE'S SHINOBI WAY!!

NARUTO

ELBOW BOLT!!

CHIDORI !!



Number 463: Sasuke vs. Raikage!!

Number 463: Sasuke vs. Raikage!!

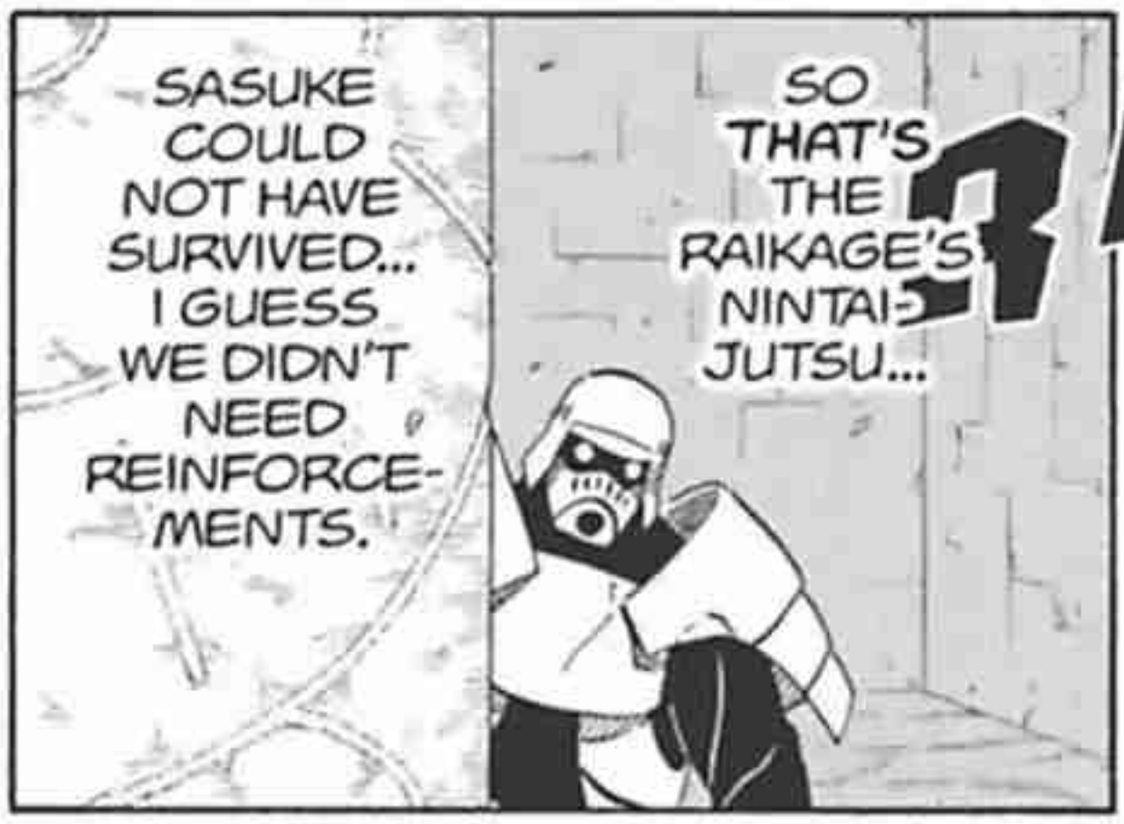
READ THIS WAY
HE FAILED ?!
YUP... AND NOW SASUKE'S A DEAD MAN.
I'M IMPRESSED THAT YOU WERE ABLE TO TOUCH ME THROUGH MY RAITON ARMOR!
A THRUST ATTACK! THE POWER IS ENHANCED WITH RAITON...
...JUST LIKE HATAKE KAKASHI'S JUTSU!
KA
?!
NO WAY...! HOW CAN HE HAVE SO MUCH CHAKRA ?!!
!
!!
WOOSH

KABOOM
LIGER BOMB !!!

RRRR
UNH...

?!!
RRRR

?!!
RRRR


SASUKE COULD NOT HAVE SURVIVED... I GUESS WE DIDN'T NEED REINFORCE-MENTS.
SO THAT'S THE RAIKAGE'S NINTAI-JUTSU...
?!

RRR
IT'S OVER.
RRR
TAK

?!

KRAK

UNH ...

SNAP

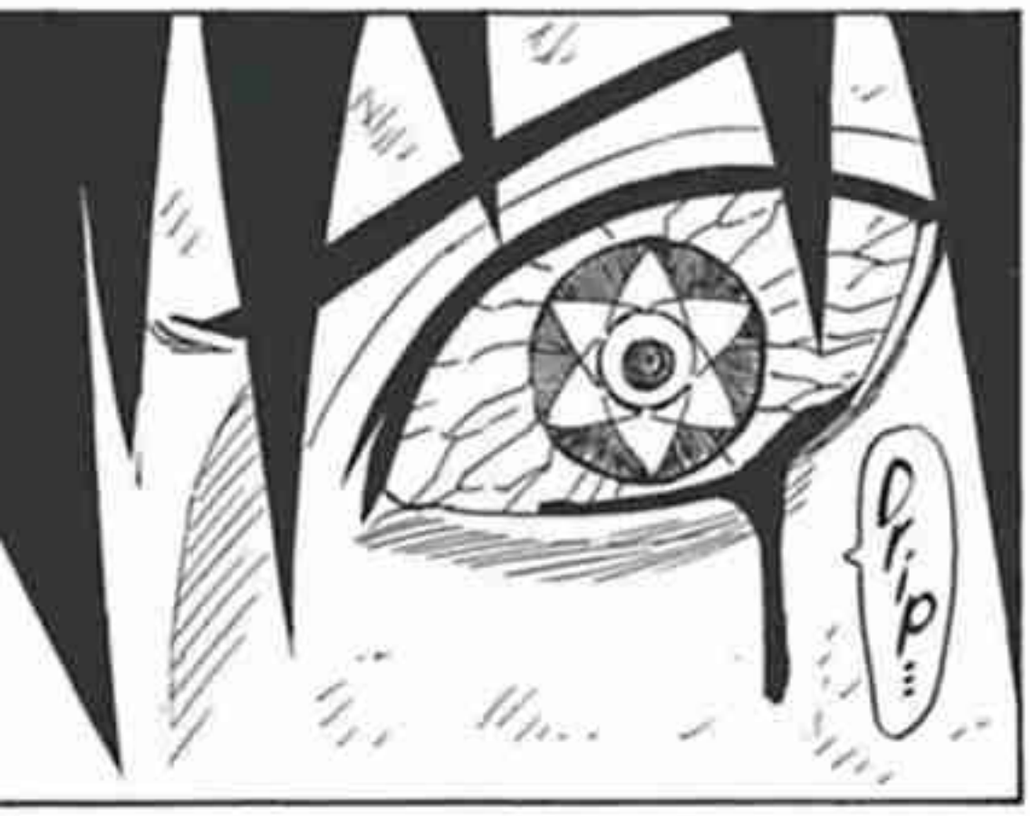
POOM
HMPH!
TOSS
SWOOO
SHEE, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!
TMP
DARUI... YOUR FIGHT IS FINISHED?
SHUP

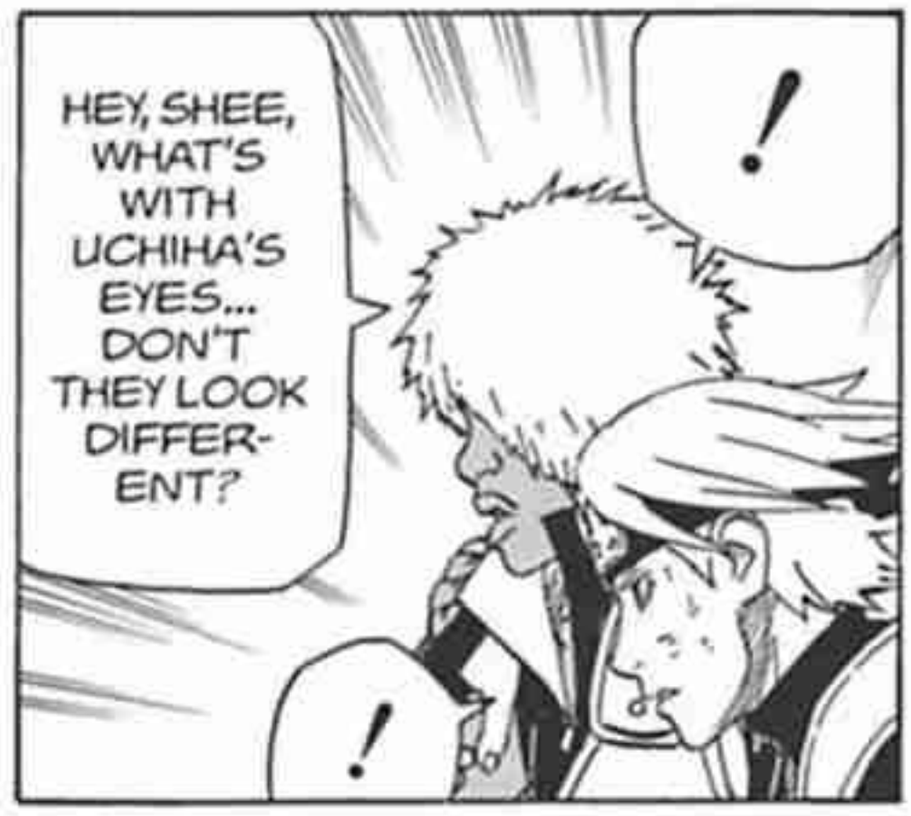
ZAP
HMPH!
SO THAT'S THE MANGEKYO SHARINGAN, HUH...

KLAK KLAK KLAK
REINFORCE-MENTS?!
!
UCHIHA SASUKE... HOW PERSIS-TENT...!
I LOST TO HIS GEN-JUTSU.
...I'M STILL PARTIALLY PARALYZED... GENIUSES LIKE THAT ARE RARE...
LOOK AT THOSE BONES... WHAT IS HE?
NO ONE'S EVER SURVIVED THAT MOVE...

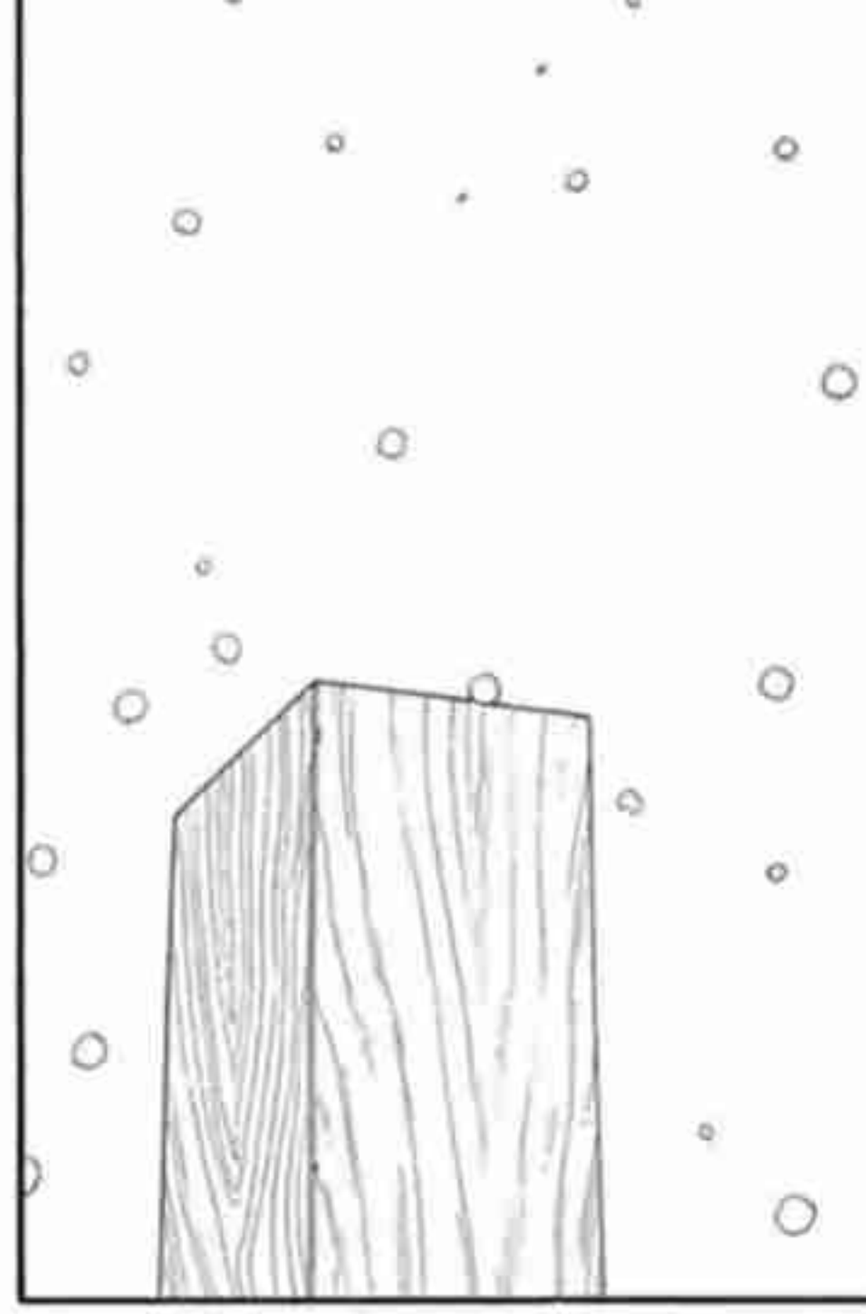
KLAK KLAK KLA K

SWOO...



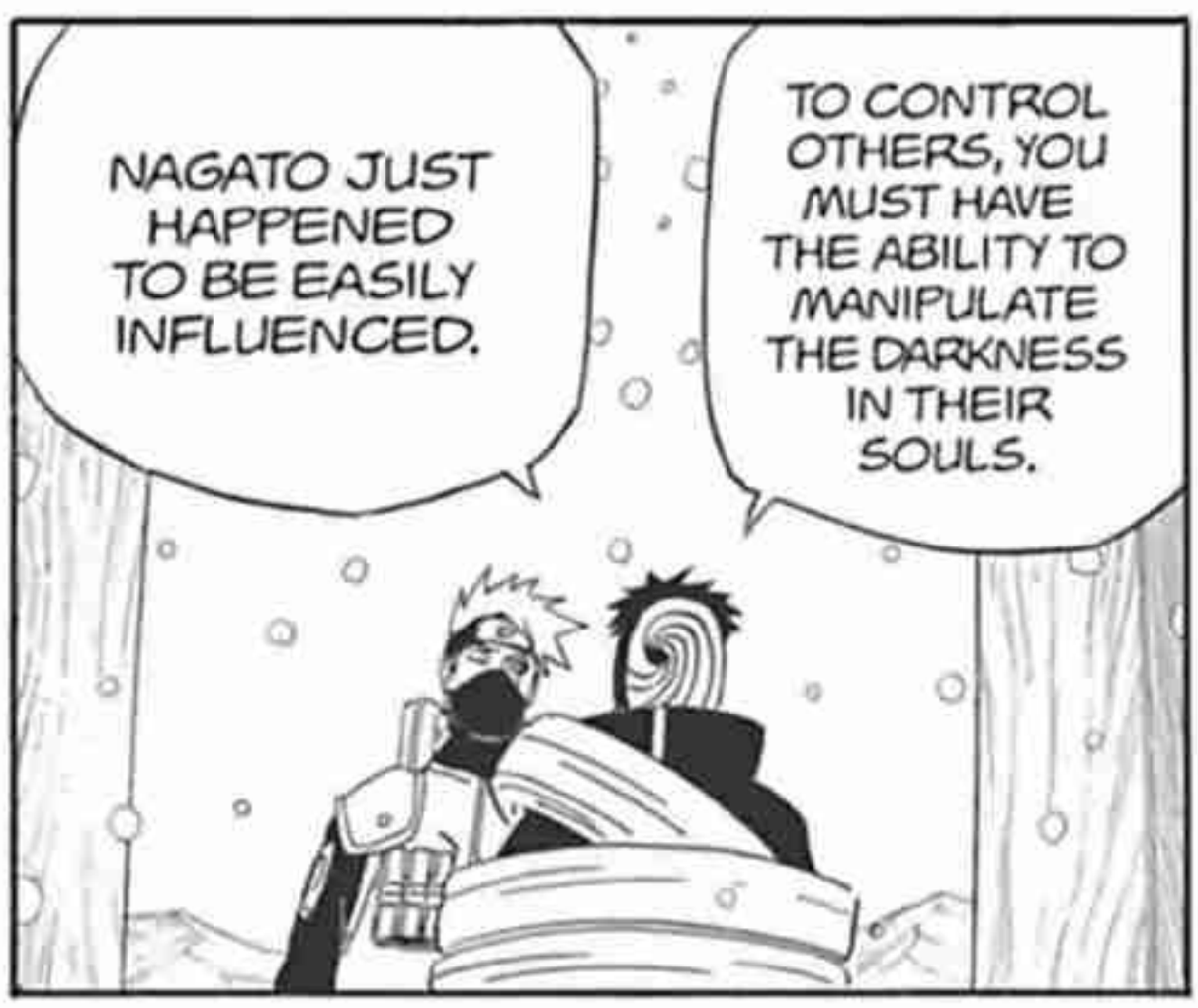


NARUTO ...
YOU WILL PROBABLY END UP FIGHTING SASUKE AGAIN ONE DAY.
OR RATHER... I'LL THROW SASUKE AT YOU.



QUIT TALKING NONSENSE!
SASUKE IS NOT YOUR TOY!!

THIS LONG-PREDESTINED BATTLE...
...I WILL HAVE SASUKE PROVE HIS HERITAGE AS AN UCHIHA.

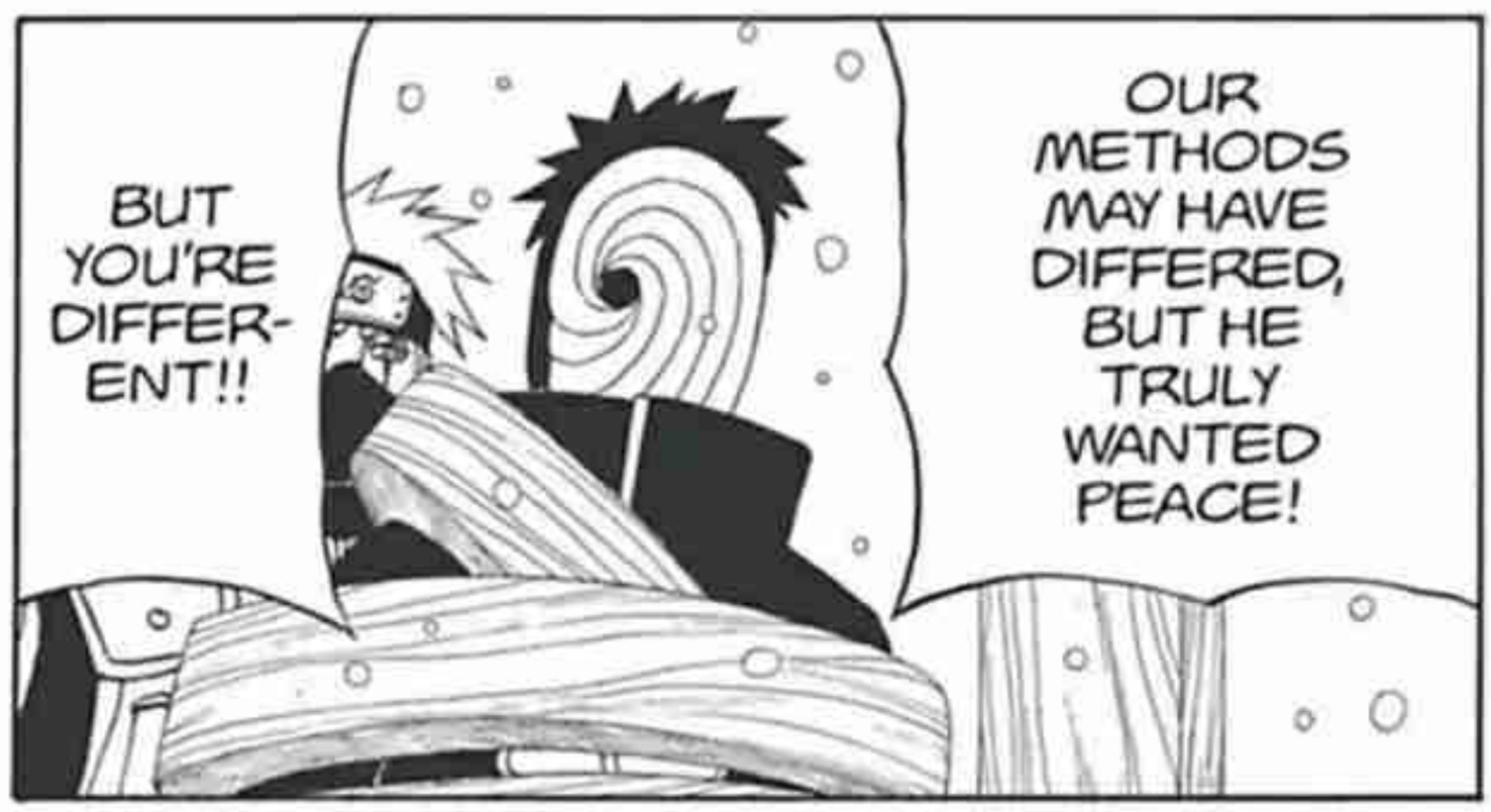

NAGATO JUST HAPPENED TO BE EASILY INFLUENCED.
TO CONTROL OTHERS, YOU MUST HAVE THE ABILITY TO MANIPULATE THE DARKNESS IN THEIR SOULS.

YOU THINK YOU CAN SWAY SASUKE LIKE YOU DID NAGATO?
THAT'S EVEN MORE OF A FANTASY, NARUTO.

NEVER COMPARE YOURSELF TO NAGATO!!

...

HEH...
FOR SURE...

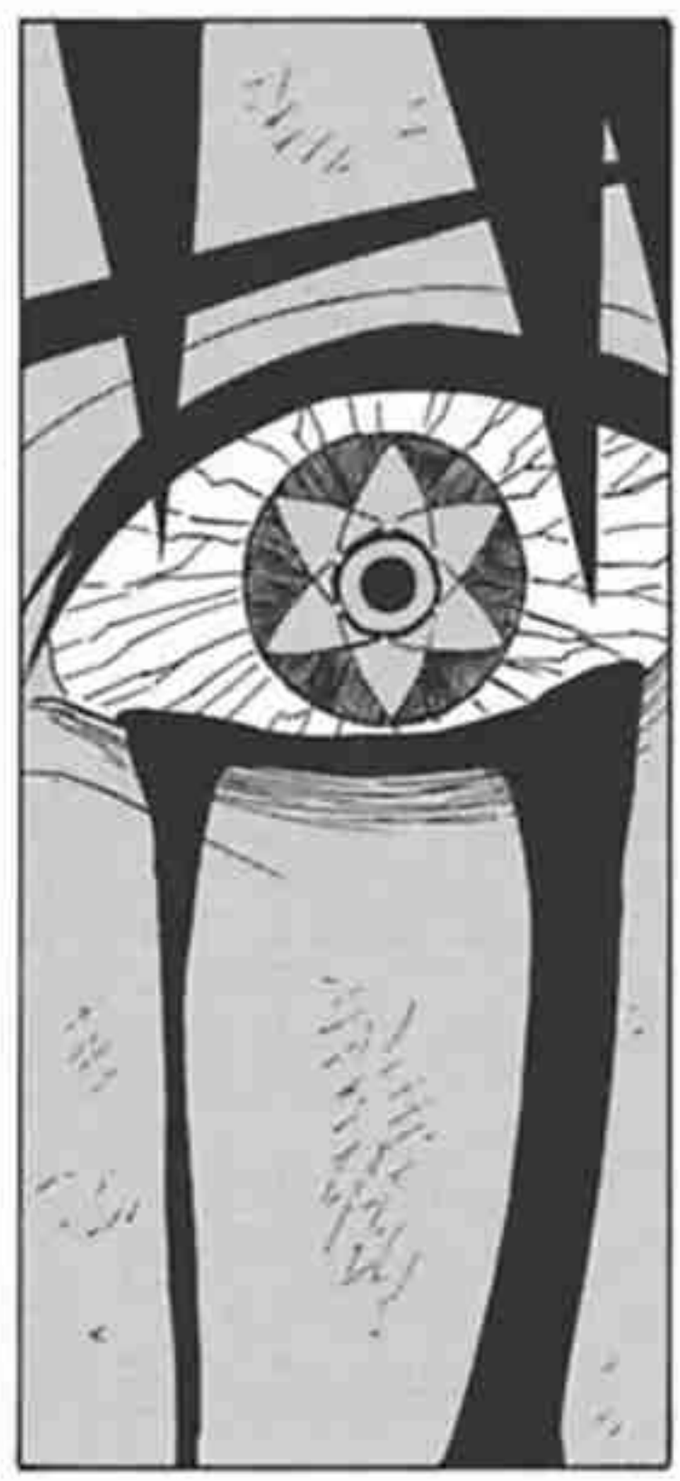

BUT YOU'RE DIFFER-ENT!!
OUR METHODS MAY HAVE DIFFERED, BUT HE TRULY WANTED PEACE!

...THEN WHY COLLECT BIJÛ?
IF YOUR GOAL REALLY IS THAT FOOLISH PROOF...
WHAT'S YOUR TRUE PURPOSE?
WHAT DO YOU SEEK?

WELL... IF I WERE FORCED TO CHOOSE...

...IT WOULD PROBABLY BE TO BECOME A COMPLETE FORM...

AMATERASU !!



!

AAAARGH!!
BWOP

PUT OUT THE FLAMES!
SHOOM
WAAAAH!!
FABOOSH

THAT MUST BE IT...!
THE AMATERASU, FLAMES THAT IGNITE ALONG ONE'S LINE OF SIGHT!

?!
TMP
THEY'RE NOT ORDINARY FLAMES! DON'T GO NEAR!
SHOOM

LATERAL BOLT OF PAIN!!

VOO SH

!!

TMP

HE'S EVEN BETTER THAN ITACHI?

HE MANIPULATED THE BLACK FLAMES?! CHANGED THEIR CHAKRA FORM TOO!!

NOTHING CAN MATCH THE RAIKAGE'S TELEPORTATION SPEED! IF YOU CAN'T KEEP UP, DEFEND YOURSELF WITH AN INTANGIBLE SHIELD! HE CAN'T JUST RECKLESSLY ATTACK SASUKE!

NICE!! A SHIELD OF BLACK FLAMES!

TO BE CONTINUED IN *NARUTO* VOLUME 50!